



Sitka Trail Plan 2003

Sitka Trail Works, Inc.

City & Borough of Sitka

USDA Forest Service Region 10 Sitka District

Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources Division of
Parks & Outdoor Recreation

Sitka Tribe of Alaska

USDI National Park Service,
Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance
Program

Sitka National Historical Park

Executive Summary

The Sitka Trail Plan calls for 16 new hiking trail construction projects (62.5 miles) and 14 trail reconstruction projects (40.8 miles). The plan also includes a proposed dive trail, improved kayak facilities, 2 ATV trails and 2 new mountain bike trails. The new construction and reconstruction projects are planned for completion within a 10-year time frame at an estimated cost of 20 million dollars.

The plan is viewed as an important rural economic development project which will increase local employment and local spending on trail construction, increase recreation infrastructure, and increase Sitka's appeal as a visitor destination. Construction of the trail system will also increase access to the national forest lands that surround Sitka and will improve quality of life.

The town of Sitka (est. pop. 8,000) is a forest dependant community surrounded completely by National Forest lands and characterized by a resource dependant economy. Successful implementation of the plan is likely, given the high degree of involvement and commitment from the non-profit organization Sitka Trail Works, Inc. and the support and significant contributions of the six other trail plan partners.

The plan is further strengthened by a Memorandum of Understanding between the trail plan partners that establishes a process of interagency cooperation via a schedule of quarterly meeting. The interagency cooperation meetings will provide a collaborative forum for development of policies and solutions on issues of protection of cultural resources, trail maintenance, trail funding, trail signage, and trail information.

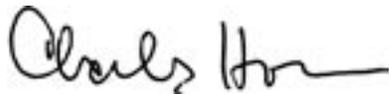
March 13, 2003

Dear Community Member,

The Sitka Trail Plan is the result of a three year, community-wide, planning effort. This plan achieves the primary goal established in 1999 by setting a clear direction for managing, maintaining and promoting Sitka trails. "Managing" includes trail planning and design, construction, and funding. Final implementation of the plan rests upon the trail plan partners and the public. Partners to the plan represent governments, government agencies, and Sitka Trail Works, a non-profit, membership corporation. These partners will combine resources with individuals, businesses and foundations in order to establish a cost-effective and diversified trail system. Some examples of the cost savings that can be realized through this unique partnership relationship are the use of volunteer labor, eligibility for grants not available to governments, in-kind contributions of expertise in trail planning and design, and collaboration to supply resources for trail maintenance.

Remember, your help can make Sitka Trails Work!

Thank you,



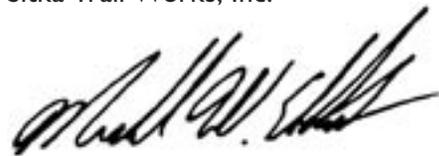
Charles Horan, President
Sitka Trail Works, Inc.



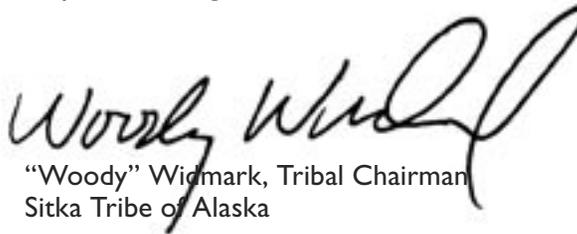
Gary Paxton, Administrator
City and Borough of Sitka



Carol Goularte, Sitka District Ranger
USDA Forest Service



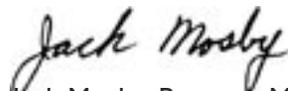
Mike Eberhardt, Area Supervisor
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Gary Gauthier, Superintendent
Sitka National Historical Park
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Jack Mosby, Program Manager
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Document Organization



This document opens with a prioritized list of new trail projects in the Sitka area. The prioritized project list organizes a suite of diversified trails by priority to the lead agency. The projects have been selected through a long process of public comment, agency review, and committee evaluation described in Chapter II. Completion of these projects will create a world-class trail network in the Sitka area.

Chapter I, “Why Sitka Trails?” contains pertinent and interesting information about area trails and provides examples of some of recreational opportunities offered throughout the planned Sitka trail system. Chapter I provides an overview of challenges to plan implementation including construction and maintenance issues, trail funding, and protection of cultural heritage resources.

Chapter II, “Bringing the Trail Plan to Life... From an Idea to a Walk in the Woods,” opens with an illustration of the extensive public process that informed the trail selection process. It is followed by a summary of the goals of the trail plan and the action strategies. It also contains a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the trail plan partners. The implementation MOU establishes a process for interagency cooperation and is designed to successfully bring the projects into being.

Chapter III, “From Shore to Summit—A Diverse Network of Trails,” offers an in-depth look at each of the projects. It begins with a vicinity map of the proposed trails followed by a detailed description of each project. The trail projects are organized into trail type categories: *Near Town Trails*, *Cultural Interest*, *Coastal Trails*, *Alpine Trails*, *Water Routes*, *Bike Routes*, and *ATV and Snow Machine Trails*. The project descriptions include a map, a synopsis of

public needs met by the project and cost estimates based on historical costs for similar projects in Southeast Alaska. As projects are developed, these estimates will be refined based on actual field measurements.

Chapter IV, “Taking Care of the Trails that We Have,” begins with a map of proposed trail reconstruction projects and contains details and cost estimates for each reconstruction project. It also includes a discussion of trail maintenance.

Chapter V, “Appendix,” contains a detailed synopsis of public and agency comments received on all projects listed in the the draft plan.

Table of Abbreviations

AKDNRPOR
Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources Div. of Parks & Outdoor Recreation
AKDOTPF
Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities
CBS
City & Borough of Sitka
FAA
Federal Aviation Administration
FHA
Federal Highway Administration
NEPA
National Environmental Protection Act
NMTP
Non-Motorized Transportation Plan
NSRAA
Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association
SJC
Sheldon Jackson College
SNHP
Sitka National Historical Park
STA
Sitka Tribe of Alaska
STW
Sitka Trail Works, Inc.
USCG
United States Coast Guard
USDA FS
Unites States Dept. of Agriculture Forest Service
USDI NPS
United States Dept. of the Interior National Park Service

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Sitka Trail Plan Projects

Each project will have a **lead agency** with responsibility for coordination of project implementation and for providing assistance to the other project participants. Projects are listed by priority.

Lead Agency: The City and Borough of Sitka

The City and Borough will be the lead agency on large projects involving extensive interaction with other state agencies such as Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities and on projects that lie on City lands. Resolution of public safety issues drives the prioritization of city projects. Respondents to the Sitka Draft Trail Plan voiced solid support for the extension and completion of the Cross Trail from Starrigavan to Herring Cove and for improvements to Sawmill Creek Road. Members of the community also requested that more trails be built to safely accommodate bicycles. In response to these, and other concerns, the City and Borough of Sitka has completed a *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan* for pedestrians, bicyclists, the disabled, and other non-motorized uses. The Trail Plan can be amended to include any new projects that are recommended and approved for inclusion in the *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan*. Funding for implementation of the entire *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan* is beyond the scope of the resources of the City & Borough of Sitka. A coordinated effort between local, state and federal funding sources will be necessary.

Lead Agency: United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service

The USDA Forest Service is the primary land manager in the Sitka area and the agency is concentrating on reconstructing existing trails to a standard that will accommodate current and future levels of use. Limited funding for projects is available through the Capital Improvements Projects (CIP) process. The agency is not currently funded at a level that is adequate to maintain all existing trails or to construct the new trails identified in this plan. For the immediate future, available funds will be dedicated to addressing the most urgent reconstruction and deferred maintenance projects. Partnership projects that combine funding from private, municipal and federal sources increase the possibility that a project will be scheduled for completion.

Sitka Trail Plan Projects

The **Lead Agency** approach will minimize duplication and lead to more cost-effective trail projects. The trails are listed by priority, but are subject to available funding. The **project participants** are parties that are interested in the trail project, or that are affected by it.

Trail Project	Page	Category	Length	Estimated Cost (x 1,000)	Project Participants	
Elements of the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan	Sawmill Creek Road Improvements	32	Near Town Trails	6.5 miles	\$2,000.0	Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities
	Sitka Cross Trail Extensions: Indian River to Starrigavan Indian River to Thimbleberry Lake	34 36	Near Town Trails	6 miles 3 miles	\$2,778.0 \$1,150.0	USDA Forest Service, AKDOTPF, FHA, SJC, STA, University of Alaska Land Trust, AKDNRDPOR, Alaska Mental Health Lands Trust, STW
	Indian River Trail Connection	38	Near Town Trails	.7 mile .3 mile	\$70.0 \$113.0	Sitka National Historical Park, Raptor Center, STW, SJC, AKDOTPF, Sitka Tribe of Alaska
	Japonski Island Pathway	40	Near Town Trails	2.1 miles	n/a	AKDOTPF, USCG Air Station Sitka, FAA, STA
Sitka Harbor Kayak Improvements	66	Water Routes	n/a	\$476.0	Port & Harbors Commission and Parks & Recreation Committee, STA, Sitka Trail Works, Inc.	

Harbor Mountain / Gavan Hill Trail	80	Trail Reconstruction	6.2 miles	\$422.0	City & Borough of Sitka, Sitka Tribe of Alaska
Starrigavan Estuary Trail	81	Trail Reconstruction	.25 miles	\$100.0	AKDNRDPOR
Lake Eva Trail	83	Trail Reconstruction	2.9 miles	\$332.0	Private foundations, commercial interests, STW, STA, Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game
Sitkoh Lake Trail	84	Trail Reconstruction	4.3 miles	\$445.0	Private foundations, commercial interests, Sitka Trail Works, Inc., STA, Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game
Starrigavan Valley Multi-Use Trails	70	ATV/Snow machine	2.5 miles	\$275.0	Sitka Recreational Riders, STA, Sitka Trail Works, Inc., Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game
Harbor Mountain Trails: Cross Country Ski/Mountain Bike Trail ADA Accessible Viewpoint Trail Lookout Tower Trail	60	Alpine Trails	3 miles 200 feet .5 miles	\$644.0	Sitka Tribe of Alaska
Indian River Trail	76	Trail Reconstruction	5 miles	\$200.0	STW, AKDOTPF, Baranof Island Housing Authority, CBS, SJC, STA, Sitka National Historical Park
North Beach Trail	86	Trail Reconstruction	.25 miles	\$25.0	Sitka Recreational Riders, Sitka Tribe of Alaska
White Sulphur Trail	87	Trail Reconstruction	.9 miles	\$73.0	City of Pelican, Sitka Tribe of Alaska
Port Banks Trail	88	Trail Reconstruction	5 miles	\$360.0	Sitka Tribe of Alaska

Lead Agency: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.

Sitka Trail Works is the lead agency on a variety of trails that require coordination of multiple land owners, have special funding requirements/opportunities, have special themes, or are trails primarily in need of reconstruction and maintenance. A multi-agency maintenance plan for area trails will be coordinated by Sitka Trail Works and is described in another section of this document.

Lead Agency: Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources Div. of Outdoor Parks & Recreation

Supported by the Sitka State Parks Citizens Advisory Board, AKDNRDPOR will be the lead agency on trails that are on State Park lands. The existing State of Alaska Legislative budget does not provide sufficient funding to improve and maintain all the State Park trails in the Sitka area. Sitka Trail Works and AKDNRDPOR will work closely to improve these trails by identifying and applying for funding opportunities, by using volunteer maintenance where possible, and by entering into partnerships that make the best use of available funds.

Lead Agency: Sitka Tribe of Alaska

The Sitka Tribe of Alaska will be responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the John Brown's Beach Trail. The trail has special meaning to tribal members and originates at a monument commemorating victims of Alaska's tuberculosis epidemic.

Trail Project	Page	Category	Length	Estimated Cost (x 1,000)	Project Participants
Sawmill Cove Loop Trails: Thimbleberry to Heart Lake Herring Cove to Beaver Lake	42 44	Near Town Trail	1.8 miles 1.25 miles	\$275.0 \$338.0	CBS, USDA Forest Service, Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities, Sitka Trail Works, Inc., University of Alaska Lands, Sitka Tribe of Alaska
Verstovia Trail	77	Trail Reconstruction	2 miles	\$170.0	USDA Forest Service, AKDOTPF, STA
Bear Cove to Camp Lake Route	62	Alpine Trail	5 miles	\$121.0	NSRAA, City & Borough of Sitka, STA
Lucky Chance Mine Historic Trail	48	Cultural Interest	19 miles	\$ 2,635.0	City & Borough of Sitka, USDA Forest Service, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, STA
Sadie Lake Trail Baranof Lake Trail	79 78	Trail Reconstruction	.8 miles 800 feet	\$297.0 \$15.0	Baranof Homeowners Association, CBS, USDA FS, STA, comm. tour operators, volunteers
Sashin Lake Trail	85	Trail Reconstruction	1.7 miles	\$388.0	USDA Forest Service, STA, comm. tour interests
South Sitka Sound Trail	54	Coastal Trail	17 miles	\$2,592.0	USDA FS, CBS, Sitka Tribe of Alaska
World War II Causeway	46	Cultural Interest	1 mile	\$1,150.0	AKDOTPF, CBS, STA, Sitka Historic Preservation Society, State Historic Preservation Officer
Historical Walking Tour of Downtown Sitka	50	Cultural Interest	2 miles	\$50.0	CBS, STA, Sitka Historic Preservation Society
Sitka Cancer Survivors "Path of Hope"	51	Cultural Interest	.5 miles	\$100.0	CBS, STA, Sitka Cancer Survivors Society
Single Track Mountain Bike Trails	68	Bicycle Trails	3 miles	\$300.0	USDA FS, Mountain Bike Club, City & Borough of Sitka, Mental Health Lands, Sitka Tribe of Alaska
Magic Island Underwater Dive Trail	64	Water Route	.25 mi.	\$17.0	Sitka Area Divers, AKDNRDPOR, Underwater Historic Diving Society, STW, STA

Sea Lion Cove Trail	74	Reconstruction	2.5 miles	\$255.0	Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources Div. of Parks & Outdoor Recreation, Sitka State Parks Citizens Advisory Board, Sitka Trail Works, Inc., comm. tour interests, City & Borough of Sitka, Sitka Tribe of Alaska
Halibut Point Pedestrian Walkway	56	Coastal Trail	.5 miles	\$1,000.0	Sitka State Parks Citizens Advisory Board, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Sitka Trail Works, Inc.

John Brown's Beach Trail	58	Coastal Trail	.2 miles	\$15.0	USCG Air Station Sitka, Federal Aviation Administration, Sitka Trail Works, Inc.
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Why Sitka Trails?



Chapter I: Why Sitka Trails?

Setting a clear direction for managing, maintaining and promoting Sitka trails

Sitka is home to a very active population of outdoor enthusiasts. We hike, ski, hunt, bike, ride all-terrain vehicles, walk for exercise, wheelchair, boat, and share the outdoors with visitors using trails. The 1999 Trail Survey conducted by Sitka Trail Works demonstrated that Sitka residents have a great desire to recreate on trails, both as a mode of transportation across town, and as a means to access the backcountry. Responses to the Draft Trail Plan indicated that additional area trails are widely supported and that the desire for a variety of trail experiences by residents and visitors has outpaced the available opportunities.

The community of Sitka is currently challenged to diversify its economy. Investment in recreation infrastructure has the potential to yield valuable dividends to the health of the trail users and to the health of the long-term economy. Travelers to Southeast Alaska place a high value on pristine surroundings and abundant fish and wildlife. They are also very receptive to opportunities to learn about area history and different cultures. The trail system proposed in this plan will enrich recreational, educational, economic, and transportation opportunities in the Sitka area. The proposed trail system will improve our health and quality of life, will allow access to the wild places at our doorstep, and will make Sitka a more attractive visitor destination.

Several of the Sitka area trails that are still in use today were originally improved by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's. The Salmon Lake, Mt. Edgecumbe, Verstovia, Sea Lion Cove, and Lake Eva trails are examples. The longevity of these trails gives us every reason to believe that the trails that are planned and built today, with proper care, will be used and appreciated far into the future. Today's investment in a first class trail system will bring permanent benefits to our community.

Special and Unique Features of Sitka Area Trails

A. Biological, Geological and Habitat Diversity

Sitka is located in Southeast Alaska on Baranof Island. Situated on the edge of the Pacific Ocean, Sitka enjoys the incredibly diverse and abundant plant and wildlife populations of the Alexander Archipelago. Sitka is in the heart of North America's only temperate rain forest. The mild climate, rich habitat and relatively low human population make this area an excellent place to view wildlife. Whales, sea otters, brown bears, eagles, deer and mountain goats are some of the animals most commonly spotted from the Sitka trail system. The complete range of habitat types, from the inter-tidal life of ocean beaches to alpine meadows, and all that lies between, are included in the proposed trail system. Geological features range from gently sloped and forested benchlands to windswept rocky spires inhabited only by the rugged mountain goat and the ubiquitous ravens. Mt. Edgecumbe, an impressive, snow-clad volcanic peak dominates views of Sitka Sound, and latent geothermal activity is evidenced by area hot springs. The frequent rainfall fosters an array of plants that range from delicate to hardy.

Publications describing area plant life and geological features are available locally.

B. Historic Preservation

Sitka history is alive and in evidence all over the town. Russians contributed to the cultural mix when they made Sitka the capital of Russian America and the small settlement became a major Pacific port in the 1800s. When the United States purchased Alaska in 1867, Sitka remained the capital of the territorial government until 1906. During World War II, 20,000 military personnel moved to the US Naval Air station in Sitka, creating another interesting chapter in the town's history.

The Sitka Historical Places Trail will be an interpreted walking tour of many of the historic buildings, churches and other interesting historic sites.

The Starrigavan Trail complex includes the site of the Russian fort at Old Sitka.

The Lucky Chance Mine Trail will offer a three-day wilderness backpacking experience through the first hard rock (gold and silver) mines in Alaska and includes the opportunity to view elusive mountain goats.

The Sitka Causeway WW II Trail will preserve one of the remaining sites of Sitka's active involvement in the Second World War. Visitors to the site will walk a long man-made causeway to view old bunkers and gun turrets surrounded by the waters of Sitka Sound.

The Lookout Tower View Trail, located high upon Harbor Mountain, will reveal a breathtaking panorama of Sitka Sound to hikers.

C. Alaska Native Culture

Sitka has a rich and vibrant cultural heritage and is the ancestral home of the Tlingit native Alaskans, many of whom still reside in this area using trails that were trod by their ancestors. Some of the finest examples of Alaskan artifacts in existence are preserved in the State museum located on the campus of Sheldon Jackson College and there is an outstanding collection of totem poles brought from throughout Southeast standing in the Sitka National Historical Park. The Sitka Tribal Enterprises operates a beautiful new, but traditionally styled, cedar community house called the Sheetka Kwaan Naa Kahidi, where traditional dances are demonstrated and where other ceremonies are held. Sitka forest trails pass through ancient cedars and perceptive hikers may observe the scars of bark removed by ancient and modern weavers and artisans.

Special efforts in the planning, design and construction of the area trail system are being taken to provide for cultural heritage resource protection in order to safeguard sites of archeological and cultural sensitivity. The John Brown's Beach Trail is included in this plan as a low-profile maintenance and reconstruction project. It is located on US Coast Guard Air Station Sitka property and is a very special cultural interest trail that originates at a memorial for the Bureau of Indian Affairs sanatorium tuberculosis victims. Current security considerations at the base allow for daylight use of the trail but prohibit trail improvements that would increase visitation levels to the memorial.



Why Sitka Trails?

D. Natural Resource Economy

Sitka's economy has historically depended upon a wealth of natural resources. Pelts of the sea otter attracted Russian fur traders. After WWII, the timber industry played a significant role in the area economy with the establishment of a large pulp mill at Silver Bay. Part of the Thimbleberry to Blue Lake Road Trail was built by pulp mill employees, as was the original Beaver Lake Trail. In the 1950's the State and Federal governments invested in the construction of a large hospital and school on Japonski Island to serve the needs of Alaska's statewide Native population. Government services, wood processing, and fishing dominated the economy during this period. When the pulp mill shut down in 1993, the social and economic fabric of the community changed. Today, health care and government services play a larger role and tourism is developing as a major economic force. Sitka Sound and the nearby continental shelf produce seafood enjoyed throughout world markets and the area boasts of world class sport fishing opportunities. Sitka has the largest harbor system in the state, and these working harbors are a scenic reminder of the importance of the fishing industry to the local economy. Tons of herring spawn in Sitka Sound each March and the optimum spot to view this event is from the Halibut Point Recreation Area Trails. Shore-based opportunities for sport fishing are limited. Trails to area lakes provide access to small populations of native trout and effort must be carefully monitored in order to ensure sustainable wild populations in the small lake and freshwater systems. The local practice is to troll, mooch and jig for

abundant runs of salmon and other varieties of fish in saltwater from a vessel. Fly fishing is gaining popularity especially at a few favorite coves and beaches. A fishing pier is planned as an addition to the Starrigavan Trail complex.

E. Sitka Trails are designed to offer a wide array of experiences

The trails encompassed in this plan are much more than bushwhack routes designed to transport hikers from point A to point B. The proposed trail system explores a pristine natural environment and honors and preserves the area's rich cultural history. Sitka residents and visitors can expect to learn volumes about natural and cultural history from the trails included in this plan.

The construction of the Indian River Trail Connection as proposed in the plan will bring the trail adjacent to the Sitka Raptor Rehabilitation center, a great place to view eagles, hawks, falcons, owls and dozens of other birds of prey. All the Sitka trails offer opportunities for birders. A locally published map of optimum viewing areas, as well as an Audobon bird checklist are available.

The reconstruction of the Sawmill Creek Road Pathway will form an important transportation link in area routes used by pedestrians and bicyclists. Extending from Jarvis Street out to Sawmill Cove improvements to this section will resolve outstanding safety issues and allow travel along fjord-like Silver Bay. A separated pathway will increase the safety of participants in a 5 K "Fun Run" associated with the annual "Whale Festival." The pathway includes "Whale Park" where hikers can listen

via an underwater acoustic microphone to humpback whales feeding on herring in Silver Bay. Sitka is a regional center for humpback and killer whale research.

The South Sitka Sound Trail and the Baranof Warm Springs Trails explore local geologic features and will skirt steaming natural baths.

The existing Starrigavan Trail complex located near the terminal of the Alaska State Ferry, allows hikers to get "up-close-and-personal" with returning pink and silver salmon and offers an interpretive estuary life trail with a boardwalk, viewing deck, and forest and muskeg trail.

The Mt. Edgecumbe Trail visits the crater of the Mt. Fuji-style volcano that stands sentinel over Sitka Sound.

The existing Thimbleberry Lake Trail is built to ADA standards and crosses an exquisite waterfall. It will be extended to become the Thimbleberry Lake to Heart Lake Trail, and will provide new off road experiences for skaters, skiers and bicyclists and hikers.

The Sea Lion Cove Trail on Kruzof Island allows hikers and surfers access to white sand beaches swept by thundering combers.

The Magic Island Underwater Trail entices divers to explore the complex and fascinating underwater flora and fauna of Sitka Sound.

F. Health Benefits of Trails

The American Hiking Society fact sheet on the health benefits of hiking and trails lists the following benefits of trails and increased exercise:

- Losing excess pounds,
- Preventing heart disease,
- Decreasing hypertension,
- Improving and maintaining mental health,
- Slowing the aging process,
- Preventing osteoporosis,
- Improving cardio-respiratory function,
- Preventing and controlling diabetes,
- Improving arthritis, and
- Relieving back pain!

As more and more Sitkans hit the trails our community population enjoys greater success dealing with health issues associated with overweight, diabetes and aging. Sitka physicians recommend walking the trails for health.

G. Economic benefits of trails

This trail plan proposes to construct, reconstruct and maintain approximately 103 miles of trails. This will provide a number of economic benefits.

First, construction of the trails listed in this plan will stimulate the local economy through construction spending on materials and wages. During the period 1993 through 2002, almost \$3 million were spent constructing trails around Sitka. If the projects in this plan can be fully implemented, another \$19 million will be invested into trails and trail infrastructure by 2012. This investment will yield dividends to local workers, contractors and businesses.

Second, property values increase in communities with diverse recreation choices.

Third, trail improvement efforts over the past 10 years have added significantly to Sitka's appeal as a visitor destination and have helped to diversify the local economy. More and better quality trails have enticed visitors to stay longer and spend more money in the community. This trail plan anticipates involvement in the SEATrails program, a new regional effort to stimulate small businesses and services through enhancing the experiences of visitors to Sitka arriving via the Alaska Marine Highway System. The plan also recommends improvements to the local harbors to make them more kayak friendly.

Fourth, trails make Sitka a healthier place to work and live and there are economic benefits to healthy lifestyles. Healthier residents spend less on health care costs and are more productive in the workplace. The Julie Hughes Triathlon, Harbor Mountain Run and Whale Festival Run are popular community events that promote health and draw visitors to participate on area trails and pathways. Many Sitka residents are health care professionals as well as vigorous trail users and Sitka Trail Works supporters. A number of Sitka's "Soggy Joggers" run regularly on the Cross Trail. Sitka Trail Works sponsors a "Trails for Health" event on National Trails Day.

Fifth, quality of life issues are important to prospective businesses and workers. A diverse trail system helps attract new businesses and retain talented employees.

As a Sports Medicine/Family Practice physician, I try to treat all my patients as athletes. Simple walking is a great way to start a fitness program and the expanding Sitka trail system is a perfect place to do it. It has been exciting to have patients begin to enjoy a healthy life style change by walking the Cross Trail or the Mosquito Cove Trail with family, friends, or dogs. The expanding trail system has provided a year round outlet for recreation, enjoyment, and the powerful medicine of physical activity.

Don Lehmann, M.D.

Why Sitka Trails?



Sixth, trails offer access to hunting, berry picking and gathering spots for weavers and artists. Sitka residents practice a relationship to the land and resources referred to as subsistence. Subsistence activities are an important element of the local economy.

Trails in other parts of the country have helped to create healthier area economies and hiking is expected to continue to grow in popularity. After just one season, 61 businesses located along the 35- mile-long Missouri River State Trail reported that the trail was having a positive effect on their businesses. Seattle's Burke-Gilman Trail has increased the value of homes near the trail by 6.5%. By the year 2050 the number of people backpacking nationwide is expected to increase 26%.

H. Current Trails, Future Trails

The Sitka Trail Plan does not list every one of the area trails but focuses specifically on 16 new trail construction projects and 14 trail reconstruction projects. The plan also includes a proposed dive trail, improved kayak facilities, 2 ATV trails and 2 new mountain bike trails. Existing trails in good condition, like those in the Sitka National Historical Park, or the new Mt. Edgecumbe trail, are not included in the plan. An important future goal of the trail plan partners is to compile an inventory of all of the area trails, with maps, and to make this information easily available to the public. Currently, the most complete set of Sitka trail maps and descriptions is contained in the Alaska Natural History Association publication available at the Sitka District office of the USDA Forest Service.

This plan calls for reconstruction of about 41 miles of trails in the trail plan area. Viewed by level of difficulty, this includes reconstruction of 10.55 miles of easy trails, 3 miles of easy to moderate trails, 14.55 miles of moderate trails, and 12.7 miles of moderate to difficult trails. Eleven of the 14 trail reconstruction projects are on trails that are accessible by boat and these trails provide access to fishing lakes, hunting areas, hot springs, and outer coastal beaches. Popular with local residents and the growing visitor industry, reconstruction of these boat accessible trails is an extremely important goal of the plan.

New trail projects in this plan will add 17 miles of easy trails, 18.5 miles of easy to moderate trails, 13 miles of moderate trails, 9 miles of moderate to difficult trails and 5 miles of difficult trails to the existing system. The new trails expand opportunities in each of the near town, cultural interest, coastal, and alpine hiking trail categories.

In addition to providing for more recreation opportunities over all difficulty levels and trail categories the plan increases the number of miles of trail directly accessible from the Sitka road system. For example, linking the Sitka road system from Green Lake to Salmon Lake would make an additional 19 miles of trail accessible. It is exciting to think of successfully bridging the Green Lake outfall so that hikers leaving from town could access the entire Lucky Chance Mines trail system without need of a boat.

New near town projects designed to connect existing trails will significantly increase the

Why Sitka Trails?

opportunity to bike and hike around Sitka. For example, completion of the 1.4 mile Thimbleberry to Blue Lake Road Trail and completion of the 1.25 mile Herring Cove to Beaver Lake Trail will result in a new “Sawmill Cove Loop Trails” complex of trails over 8 miles in total length. Skiers, bicyclists, skaters and hikers will all enjoy the new loop trails.

The plan also provides for expansion of the trails rated accessible for the physically challenged. Sections of the Harbor Mountain, Thimbleberry and Cross trails are all planned for construction to Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

The trails proposed in this plan form a collection of carefully considered mini-projects designed to link and maximize the efficiency of existing trails, special feature trails, or trails that diversify the recreation experiences of users.

This plan will be amended to include recommendations made for projects that are developed as part of a non-motorized transportation plan. One day, an alternative non-motorized transportation route will allow biking or walking from the Ferry Terminal at Starrigavan to Herring Cove and will connect neighborhoods via the Cross Trail.

Further from town several large trail construction projects are designed to offer overnight trail experiences not currently available. Two new multi-day backpacking trail systems are included in the plan. They are the 19 mile Lucky Chance Mine Trails and the 17 mile South Baranof Coastal Trails.

Sitka lags behind other Southeast communities in recognizing the many values of trails and investing in their construction. This may primarily be a function of District and Regional Forest Service budget limitations and policies, and fiscal restraints at the local government level. The Juneau/Admiralty area leads the Southeast region with over 158 miles of trails constructed. Ketchikan / Misty Fjords has 73 miles of trails and Petersburg residents enjoy 71 miles of trails. Compare these numbers to the 48 miles of trails currently serving the Sitka area. Trails are enjoying increasing use throughout the community and widespread support for the Trail Plan shows that expansion of the area trail system is justified.

This trail plan focuses on planned construction, reconstruction, and maintenance of area trails but it is not a complete list of all area trails. See the Sitka Trails, Recreation Opportunity Guide, published by ANHA, Alaska Natural History Association, for a complete list of area trails.

Challenges to Trail Plan Implementation

A. Construction and Maintenance Challenges

The trails proposed in this document have been designed to provide a finished trail that is similar in quality to recent projects at Mosquito Cove, Thimbleberry Lake and Mt. Edgumbe. With scheduled maintenance, these trail solutions deliver the maximum benefit for their cost. Because of plentiful rainfall in Southeast Alaska and the organic, unstable soils found here, special design treatments are often needed to minimize trail maintenance and maximize user satisfaction. Recent projects by the Forest Service and Sitka Trail Works demonstrate the cost-effective technologies that

Easily accessible and well-maintained, Sitka's trails are a key element of our outdoor recreation resources. For all the amenities of Twenty-first Century life that we enjoy in Sitka, such simple ones as our woodland trails are increasingly important. They open the door to our first-hand enjoyment of the world of nature that surrounds us on all sides.

**Thad Poulson,
Editor
Daily Sitka Sentinel**

Why Sitka Trails?

In the 1930's the Federal Government was spending all kinds of money building trails around Sitka through the CCC Program...and nobody was using them. Today, everyone loves the trails and wants more of them to use, but funding them is no longer a priority!

**Larry Calvin,
Sitka outdoorsman with more
than 60 years of experience on
local trails**

can be employed. New materials such as Geogrid (used to “float” trails) and improved cost-effective helicopter technology have decreased costs of trail construction and improved trail durability. The improved trail designs found in this plan weigh cost and aesthetics, in order to determine optimum trail placement along the most desirable routes.

The reconstruction projects listed in this plan in Chapter IV will bring existing trails up to a standard that will sustain current and anticipated uses without incurring escalating resource damage. In the past, many trails were simply brushed-out routes that rose to the status of a “trail” as popular use increased. They were not designed or constructed for safety and durability. As a result, some of the trails have eroded and become dangerous. Continued discussion of maintenance and reconstruction issues on area trails is also found in Chapter IV.

Even the best trail needs maintenance over the long term. In the rain forest, old growth stands are renewed through wind events rather than fire, as in other forests. As a consequence, removal of “wind throw” trees from trails is an annual activity. Brushing and minor repairs should be done periodically, and a vigilant and pro-active program to minimize and control hydrological damage will ensure the longevity and integrity of the trail system. Occasionally, some trail sections will require larger repair projects.

To make a trail system that lasts, resources must be provided for maintenance. Typically these come from a variety of sources—government agencies, commercial users and volunteers. The new action strategy and the interagency cooperation process outlined in the MOU will provide a regular, efficient and coordinated system of maintenance for the area trails. It should be noted that maintenance costs

are not usually calculated as ongoing expenses in agency budgets. The interagency cooperation forum will provide valuable assistance in planning for and obtaining the necessary funds for trail maintenance.

B. Protection of Cultural Heritage Resources

The mild climate, natural harbors, and abundant fish and wildlife of Southeast Alaska supported a sophisticated native culture for thousands of years before the arrival Russian and American immigrants to Sitka. The Tlingit culture, like other Northwest Indian cultures, was based on a hunter-gather tradition. Unlike most hunter-gatherer societies of the world, the abundant natural resources of the environment combined with the intelligence and artistry of the Tlingit people to produce artist, shaman and warrior classes within this early culture. Sadly, and similar to many other instances of early contacts between cultures of that era, the arrival of outsiders brought diseases that devastated the population of original inhabitants. Well-intentioned missionaries and educators persuaded the indigenous people to abandon some old village sites, subsistence sites and burial practices. These changes were swift and unrecorded, as a result, it is still possible to encounter undocumented sites of cultural and archeological sensitivity during the design and construction of the trail projects outlined in this plan.

A procedure for the protection of cultural heritage sites and specific language that protects the confidentiality of sites, has been developed between the Sitka Tribe of Alaska and the USDA FS and between the Sitka Tribe of Alaska and the State of Alaska. The centuries old trails that surround Sitka contain sensitive cultural sites both listed

Why Sitka Trails?

and unlisted in the Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRs) records. These records are closed to the public. The trail plan partners will respect the confidentiality of site information and will utilize the governmental processes that apply to each specific trail project and will follow the established policy and procedure as required by law.

As yet, there are no agreed-to procedures to identify and protect these sites on private or city lands. It is the intention of the trail plan partners to develop methods for assessing areas of archeological and cultural sensitivity prior to any actual trail construction. These procedures will be developed by the plan partners and approved by the Sitka Tribe of Alaska via the interagency cooperation meetings that are established by the MOU. Working together, the trail plan partners will be able to protect and preserve this precious heritage unique to the Sitka area.

C. Funding Challenges

Major challenges exist to funding trail construction, reconstruction and maintenance but a coordinated effort on a number of fronts could bring necessary financial support for projects.

Federal support—The Alaska Congressional delegation has an important role to play in support of the regional USDA FS budget and legislation like the Conservation & Reinvestment Act and the 21st-Century Transportation Equity Act. Most of the miles of trails in this plan fall on the Federal Lands that form the Tongass National Forest. Plan partners and supportive members of the public

can work to educate federal decision-makers about the trail plan. It will be vitally important to assure that the Sitka Ranger District trail construction and reconstruction projects are listed and funded through the USDA FS Capital Improvement Projects process. Special initiative funding may also be available in support of area trails.

State & Local Support—Trail advocates must be educated to understand that legislative support of Sitka Trail Plan is vital at the state and local levels. State spending is being reduced across the board, and several of the trail plan projects rely heavily on State funds through the Alaska Department of Transportation, Planning and Funding and Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Outdoor Parks and Recreation. The support and understanding of local Assembly members and State legislators of the value of the trail plan to the area economy is essential in order to ensure adequate funding to local and state programs that create and maintain trails.

Transportation funding also must be assured. It will play a key role in the Sawmill Creek Road improvements and other elements of the non-motorized transportation plan. Funding to State Parks must be stabilized and improved in order to continue the maintenance of the Starrigavan Trail complex and to allow the planned reconstruction and improvements to the Sea Lion Cove Trail and the Halibut Point Recreation Area.

Sitka Trail Works will actively pursue funding for trail projects through grant writing, education of local decision-makers and legislators, and

membership support. Local governments, private foundations and civic organizations, cruise ship lines and trail users can all help to provide matching funds to leverage grant opportunities. Sitka Trail Works, Inc. and the other trail plan partners, can utilize volunteer labor and in-kind contributions to supply needed elements of trail construction, design and project implementation. It may also be possible to create a “Mitigation Bank” in order to fund trails that are built as enhancements to environments that are altered by permitted activities, as in wetlands fill remediation projects.

The Sitka Area Trail plan delivers a comprehensive and properly researched system of recreation infrastructure, informed by extensive public and agency comment. The plan and the accompanying MOU demonstrate the strong commitment and support of the projects on the part of the community and local agencies. The involvement of Sitka Trail Works as a coordinating force, and the contribution of the resources of an Executive Director dedicated to the completion of the plan projects, increases the likelihood of project success. The interagency process as agreed to in the MOU ensures ongoing cooperation to foster a superior trail system for the Sitka area. Trail funding may come from a variety of sources and the trail plan partners, through the interagency coordination process outlined in the MOU, are dedicated to finding the necessary funds to complete the listed projects over the next ten years.

It will take years of dedicated coordination of effort to bring the projects in this plan

Why Sitka Trails?

to life but the resulting trail system will be something that we can all take pride in having helped create.

D. Incorporate Trails into Regional and City-wide Planning

If the Sitka Trail Plan is to succeed in guiding future trail work, it will need support from many tiers of government, including the U.S. Forest Service, the State of Alaska, and the City and Borough of Sitka. Within local government it is vital to get support from the Assembly, the Planning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, and other departments, committees, and commissions. All three agencies should incorporate this plan into future planning documents and existing policy, including possible revisions to the Sitka Comprehensive Plan and the Sitka Parks and Recreation Plan. As Sitka develops, opportunities will exist for integrating trail development with other municipal, state, and USDA Forest Service projects.

It is further recommended that the City and Borough of Sitka Planning Commission introduce a measure to require new subdivisions to consider trail easements during the planning process. An important element of City planning is budgetary planning, and the interagency cooperation meetings will provide a forum to develop financial plans for trail project implementation.

E. Trail Information

Maps, field guides, and signs are as important to the public's enjoyment and use of the trails as are bridges and boardwalk. Effective trail information guides hikers, encourages safety,

and raises trails in the public consciousness. To be most effective, trail information should be comprehensive, easy to access, and inexpensive. This project would develop and implement a strategy to present a unified trail information system about Sitka's trails.

The trail plan partners will develop this project jointly via the process established in the MOU. The details of how an information system will be implemented are yet to be determined but likely components include:

- A web based field guide.
- A printed trail guide
- An inexpensive single page map of trails near Sitka
- Multiple distribution locations for trail information.

Giving the public the information to plan their hikes to fit their interests and abilities will enhance enjoyment of the trails. An integrated approach will reduce confusion and decrease cost.

Trails as Transportation

The City & Borough of Sitka completed a Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (NMTP) in 2002. This planning effort identified where Sitkans are currently walking and biking and identified where new sidewalks, pathways, trails, and other facilities could increase transportation efficiencies. Public hearings and design development of the NMTP were conducted by the planning consultants Jensen, Yorba, and Lott in the Fall of 2002. The Cross Trail, the Sawmill Creek Road improvements,

Indian River Trail connection and Japonski Loop are all components of the NMTP and will benefit with integration into city planning. Recommendations for other specific aspects of the NMTP not included in this document, like neighborhood connector trails and a re-route of the Cross Trail, may be incorporated into the Sitka Trail Plan via the plan amendment procedures described in the MOU.

A. SEATrails

SEATrails is a new regional planning process that identifies Southeast Alaska area trails that are particularly suitable for customers of the Alaska Marine Highway System. Identification and promotion of recreational activities in the ports visited by the state ferry system and along the ferry transportation corridor will make Southeast Alaska a more user-friendly recreation destination and will increase the year-round viability of the state ferry service. Enhanced knowledge of recreation opportunities will bring economic benefits to towns served by the ferry through increased numbers of kayak and bike rentals, B&B clients and other economic benefits associated with independent destination travelers. The Trail Plan MOU states, "The trail plan partners agree to utilize the interagency cooperation meetings as a forum to support and inform the SEATrails program." A subset of Sitka area trails have been recommended by the trail plan partners to be featured as SEATrails.

The recommended 2002 Sitka SEATrails are:

- The Cross Trail (from Starrigavan Campground to Blue Lake Road)
- The Starrigavan Trails Complex (Including

- the Estuary Trail, the Forest and Muskeg Trail and the Mosquito Cove Trail)
- The Magic Island Dive Trail
- The Sitka National Historical Park Trails
- The Sawmill Cove Loop Trails (Thimbleberry Lake to Heart Lake to Beaver Lake)

Sitka Trail Plan Area

The Sitka Trail Plan will serve all public lands of Baranof Island, Kruzof Island, and the southern half of Chichagof Island, which includes a large part of the Sitka Ranger District of the Tongass National Forest and the entire City and Borough of Sitka.

A. Outlying Communities in the Sitka Trail Plan

The communities of Angoon, Baranof, Port Alexander and Tenakee Springs are within the Sitka Trail Plan area. The Sitka Trail Survey was mailed to these communities in 1999 and comments were returned from Port Alexander and Tenakee Springs. Tenakee respondents did not support new trail development in their area. Mixed responses were received from Port Alexander residents. Accordingly, new trail proposals near the outlying communities have not been pursued, but it is possible to amend the plan if as-yet-unlisted projects are supported by the community. Tourism use is increasing on outlying trails. The Sadie Lake, Baranof Lake and Sashin Lake trails reconstruction projects will upgrade trails near the communities of Port Alexander and Baranof.



Bringing the Plan to Life

1999 Summer

Cooperative agreement signed with USDI National Park Service Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program and Sitka Trail Works. Goal: Creation of an area trail plan.

1999 Winter

Trail plan committee develops a public survey that is widely distributed to gather data. Previous recreation and trail plans reviewed. All existing and potential trail projects are inventoried.

2000 April

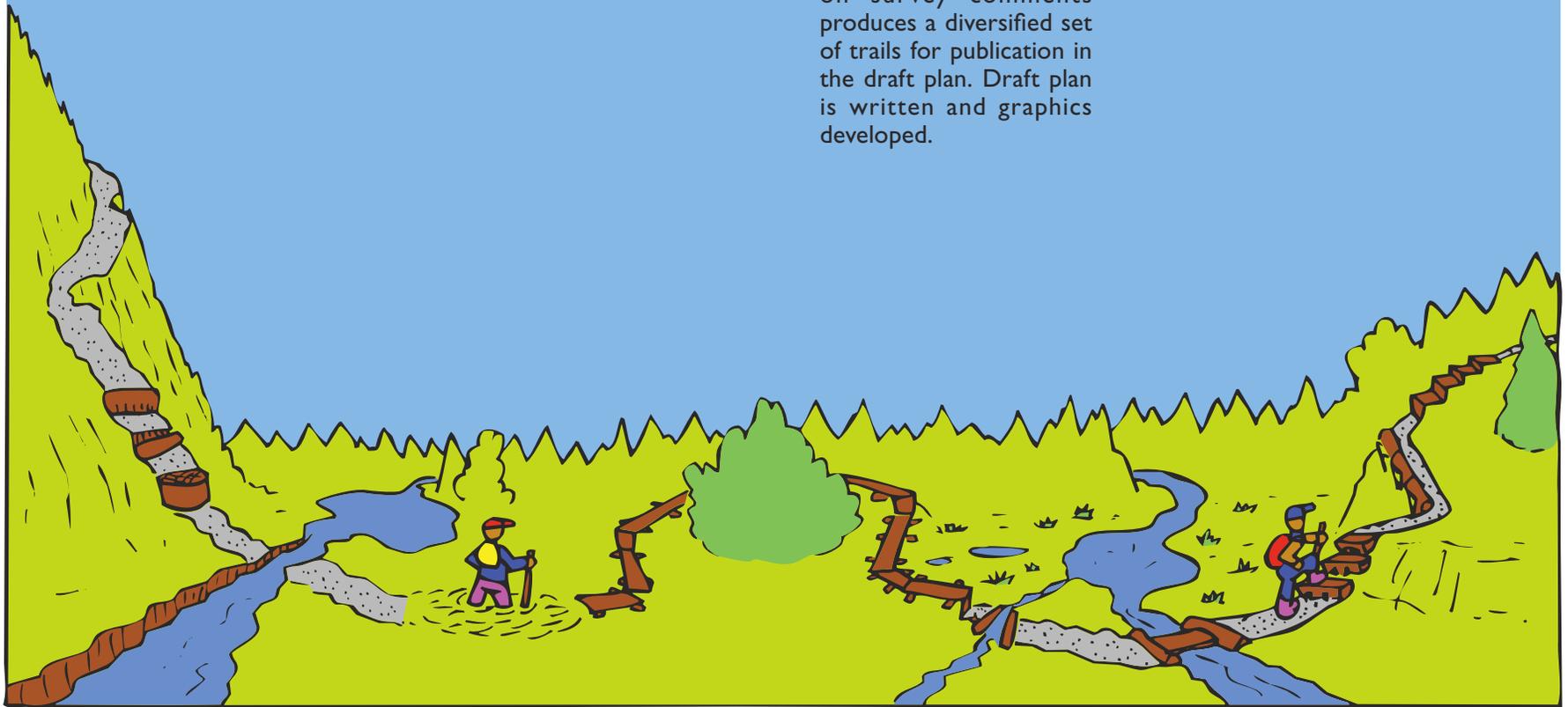
Survey response is excellent. Comments are analyzed and collated.

2000 Summer/ Winter

Committee work based on survey comments produces a diversified set of trails for publication in the draft plan. Draft plan is written and graphics developed.

2001 April

Draft plan signed by plan partners USDA Forest Service, Sitka Trail Works, City & Borough of Sitka, National Park Service, and Alaska DNR Div. of Parks & Outdoor Recreation.



From an Idea to a Walk in the Woods

2001 May

Draft plan is posted online and 100 copies are published for comment. Open house and radio call-in provide more input on the draft plan.

2001 Summer

Written responses on the draft plan from the public and agencies are analyzed.

2002 Spring

Final prioritized list of trail projects published for comment.

2002 Fall

Final trail plan written, reviewed and approved by plan partners.

2001 Fall

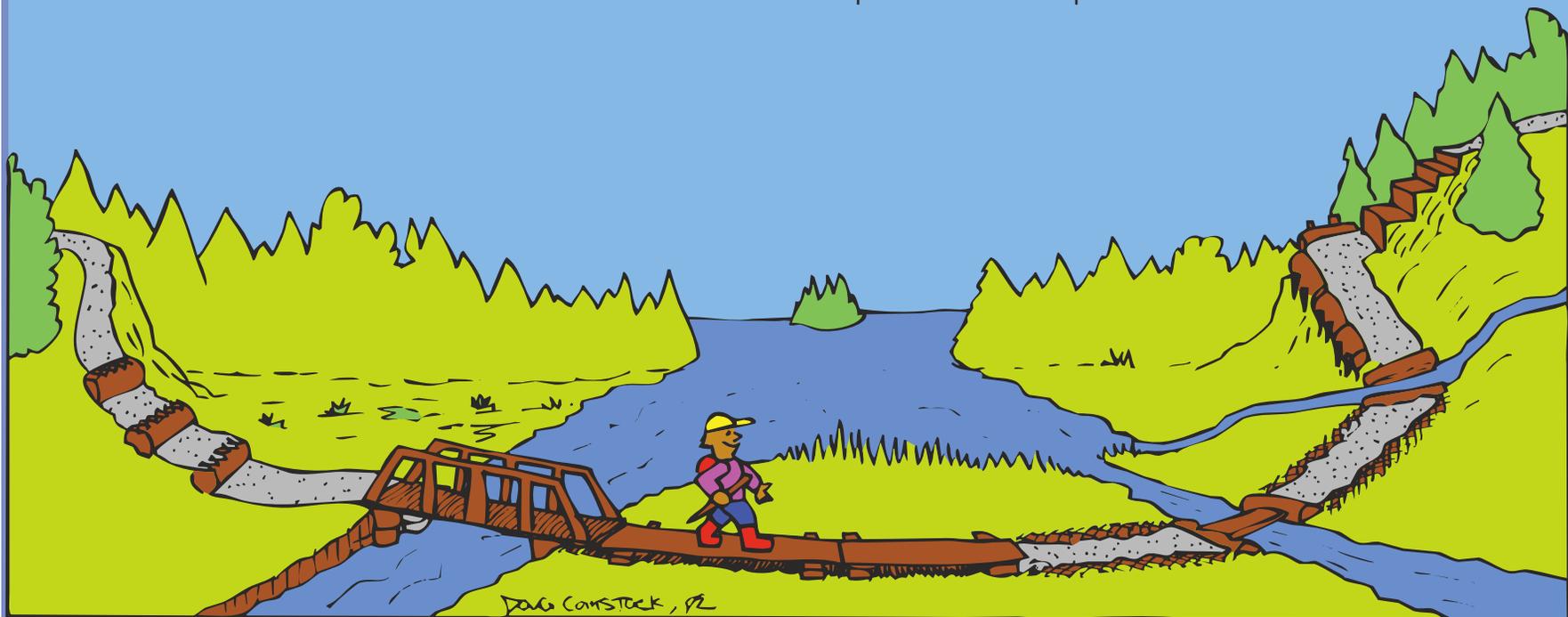
Trail projects are prioritized and organized by lead agency based on public and agency comments.

2002 Summer

A Memorandum of Understanding is drafted and circulated among the plan partners. The MOU creates an implementation process for the trail plan.

2003 Spring

Trail Plan and MOU signed and published.



Action Strategy Objectives, 2002 – 2012

Working together, the trail plan partners will use a teamwork approach to implement a new set of strategies to bring the trail plan projects to life.

- ❑ Sign an Implementation Memorandum of Understanding on Interagency Cooperation between the trail plan partners. Commit to implement the projects listed by Agency Priority in the Sitka Trail Plan as an achievable goal over the next ten years. Agree to revisit the overall plan in 2012.
- ❑ Undertake a comprehensive Trail maintenance program, coordinated by Sitka Trail Works, and implemented via the Interagency Cooperation Meetings.
- ❑ Conceive and execute a strategy to fund all the projects listed in the Sitka Trail Plan. A strategy that combines anticipated revenues in existing agency budgets, funds available through grants, municipal funds, and private donations, and federal appropriations, either directly or through agency programs, is anticipated.
- ❑ Develop and implement procedures for the protection of cultural heritage resources affected by trail plan projects via the Interagency Cooperation meetings.
- ❑ Amend the Sitka Trail Plan as needed during the ten-year period, but remain sensitive to the need for public comment. If substantively new and different project concepts are proposed, solicit new public input. If necessary, defer the new project until the 2012 Trail Plan review.
- ❑ Utilize the quarterly interagency cooperation meetings of the trail plan partners as described in the MOU to work on issues including, but not limited to, trail signage, trail information, trail etiquette, protection of cultural resources and the Sitka area interface with the SEATrails program.

Goals of the Sitka Trail Plan

- ✓ Set a clear direction for maintaining, managing and promoting Sitka trails.
- ✓ Create a prioritized trail construction/reconstruction plan.
- ✓ Provide diversified recreational opportunities throughout the Sitka trail system.
- ✓ Pursue trail construction and maintenance coordinated with local, state and federal agencies.
- ✓ Develop an Action Plan to accomplish these goals.
- ✓ Create an updated information system about trails.
- ✓ Promote public awareness of the cultural and natural wonders accessible from the Sitka trail system.



Chapter II. From an Idea to a Walk in the Woods

Goals & Objectives

This plan sets forth clear goals and action strategy objectives in order to achieve those goals. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been developed defining an implementation process for the trail plan partners. The MOU establishes a cycle of quarterly meetings that will allow the partners to work as a team. To the extent possible, the trail projects will be developed according to their priority with the support of the lead agency, depending upon available resources. The MOU also allows for minor amendments to the plan.

Public Review and Agency Comments on the Draft Sitka Trail Plan

The Trail Plan Committee received and reviewed over 50 written comments and a number of people did more than just “fill in the blanks” on the comment form. Many took the time to write insightful, thoughtful, practical and creative suggestions about the Sitka area trail system. One hundred copies of the Draft Trail Plan were distributed and we estimate that over 250 individuals read the plan. Many reviewers also made comments through the FM radio call-in show on April 17, 2001 and the open house held on April 25. Public comment on the draft was very valuable

and indicated distinct preferences from the respondents. From these comments, the Trail Plan Committee gained an appreciation of how much people care for, and use, the existing trails. We have attempted to listen to and incorporate the most widely held views into the final Sitka Trail Plan. In response to the comments, some trails were dropped, and a few new trails were added.

Something that emerged pretty quickly from the public comments was frequent mention that we need to do a better job of maintaining existing trails. As a result Sitka Trail Works has agreed to utilize the quarterly interagency cooperation meetings to develop and to execute a comprehensive trail maintenance program as described in the MOU.

The Trail Plan Committee devised a simple rating system for the public comments. A percentage was calculated by dividing the number of supportive comments received on a particular trail project by the total numbers of comments received. There was one exception to this process. The draft plan described the risks to public safety along Sawmill Creek Road and recommended that this project be listed first in priority. That recommendation was not challenged in the public comments and redesign and reconstruction of safer bike and pedestrian routes along Sawmill Creek remains the number one community-wide priority project. A detailed table summarizing the public comments on the projects that were included in the Draft Trail Plan is located in the Appendix at the end of this document.



Bringing the Trail Plan to Life



Wade Parrish

Memorandum of Understanding

FS Agreement No.: 02MU-111065-079

**Implementation
Memorandum of Understanding
Between**

**City and Borough of Sitka,
Sitka Tribe of Alaska,
Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation,
USDA Forest Service, Sitka Ranger District,
National Park Service, and
Sitka Trail Works, Inc.**

To: Create a process of interagency cooperation to complete the projects listed in the Sitka Area Trail Plan.

Article I – Background and Objectives

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into by the City and Borough of Sitka, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Federal and State agencies, and Sitka Trail Works, Inc., a non-profit organization, henceforth referred to as the "Trail Plan Partners" or, "The partners". The purpose of this understanding is to guide and to define the working relationship between these organizations with respect to the implementation and execution of the Sitka Area Trail Plan.

This MOU defines a process of interagency cooperation that will be utilized to achieve the planning, funding, construction, reconstruction and maintenance of a system of trails that passes through the full range of Southeast Alaskan habitats and terrain as set forth in the Sitka Area Trail Plan. (published 2002).

To the extent practicable these trails are to be constructed and maintained to a standard that will accommodate current and anticipated levels of use, within the defined timeframe, without incurring escalating damage to the natural environment.

This process is intended to foster cooperation and communication on a number of issues necessary to achieve the goals of the plan. These issues include, but are not limited to, trail maintenance, trail funding and protection of cultural heritage sites.

The Antiquities Act, the Archeological Resource Protection Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Native American Graves Protection Act, the Alaska Historic Preservation Plan, Alaska State Statutes AS 9.25.129 and State regulations 11 AAC 16.010, all set forth policies for the protection of cultural heritage sites. The trail plan partners will adopt procedures to conform to these policies as they develop methods and means to implement the projects listed in the Trail plan.

This MOU of understanding is a supplement to the Cooperative Agreement 1443CA991000074 between Sitka Trail Works, Inc. and the National Park Service.

Memorandum of Understanding

From an Idea to a Walk in the Woods

FS Agreement No.: 02MU-111005-079

Authority for this memorandum of understanding is authorized by Sections 2, 8, and 11 of the National Trails System Act and by Section 2 of the Outdoor Recreation Act of 1963. "...To cooperate with, and provide technical assistance to, state and local agencies, including non-profit organizations, with respect to conservation and trails programs."

Article 2 – The Trail Plan Partners agree to the following:

- A. Interagency Cooperation Meetings** - The partners agree to meet as often as necessary to ensure adequate communication and coordination of effort in order to achieve the goals of the Sitka Area Trail Plan.
- 1.) A minimum of four (4) meetings per year will be held but more may be scheduled, if desired by the parties.
 - 2.) Sitka Trail Works, Inc. agrees to coordinate the meetings, to keep partners informed of meeting dates, to distribute a draft meeting agenda at least 10 days prior to the meeting date, to distribute meeting notes and decisions within one month of the meeting date, and to otherwise facilitate this process as required.
 - 3.) Each agency will send at least one representative to each meeting. Representatives from four out of six partners are required in order to hold a meeting.
 - 4.) Teleconference participation is acceptable.
- B. Commitment to share expertise** - The partners agree to share resources, including but not limited to, personnel and equipment, and to assist one another in the planning, design and implementation of trail construction projects, the extent of which is to be determined by the partners on a case by case basis.
- C. Consensus** - All actions of the trail plan partners will be undertaken by consensus. A single dissenting vote of the members present prohibits an action from being taken.
- D. Amendments** - The Sitka Trail Plan may be amended at the interagency cooperation meetings of the trail plan partners.
- 1.) The amendment process is a tool to allow flexibility in plan implementation.
 - 2.) Minor amendments should not significantly alter the plan character or expense.
 - 3.) If a substantive change to the plan is suggested as a plan amendment, the trail plan partners will solicit public and agency comment on the proposed amendment. If comments on the proposed amendment indicate an irresolvable dissent or controversy, the suggested amendment will be dropped, or deferred until the 2012 Plan.
- E. Cultural Resources Protection Policies and Procedures** - The trail plan partners agree to utilize the Interagency Cooperation meetings to collaborate on the development and adoption of Cultural Resources Protection policies and procedures for all trail projects.
- 1.) This may entail on-site surveys prior to trail development and may differ slightly due to the existing procedures of the affected agency.

FS Agreement No.: 02MU-111005-079

- 2.) The partners will also develop a procedure for the notification of appropriate parties should an archeological site be discovered

- F. Trail Maintenance** - The partners agree to undertake a comprehensive Trail maintenance program, coordinated by Sitka Trail Works, and implemented via the Interagency Cooperation meetings.
- 1.) The partners agree to undertake an inventory of maintenance needs, to develop an annual plan of work and to share resources and to collaborate on obtaining materials in order to implement the maintenance program.
 - 2.) Sitka Trail Works agrees to coordinate a volunteer program to assist in trail maintenance.
 - 3.) The interagency trail maintenance program will supplement and complement any existing trail maintenance programs that may be in place.
- G. Funding Strategy** - The partners agree to conceive and execute a strategy to fund all the projects listed in the Final Trail Plan. The strategy may combine anticipated revenues in existing agency budgets with funds available through grants and private donations, and/or with Federal appropriations, either directly or channeled through agency programs. As a component of the funding strategy, the partners will develop a table of estimated costs for the projects, will network on grant availability and will work to develop long term relationships with private foundations. Sitka Trail Works, Inc. will assist in these efforts as needed.
- H. Funding Obligation** - This instrument is neither a fiscal nor a funds obligation document. Any endeavor involving reimbursement, contribution of funds, or transfer of anything of value between the parties to this instrument will be handled in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures including those for Government procurement and printing. Such endeavors will be outlined in separate agreements that shall be made in writing by representatives of the parties and shall be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This instrument does not provide such authority. Specifically, this instrument does not establish authority for noncompetitive award to the cooperator(s) of any contract or other agreement. Any contract or agreement for training or other services must fully comply with all applicable requirements for competition.
- I. SEATrails** - The Trail Plan Partners agree to utilize the interagency cooperation meetings as a forum to support and inform the SEATrails program.
- J. Other issues** - The partners will utilize the interagency cooperation meetings to work on issues including, but not limited to, trail signage, trail information distribution, trail etiquette, and user conflicts.
- ## Article 3 – Term of understanding and dissolution related to the Trail Plan and conditions of Termination, Modification, and Assignment of the parties.
- A. Term of understanding and dissolution of the Trail Plan** - It is the intention of the Sitka Area Final Trail Plan that the listed projects be completed over the next ten years, 2002 – 2012. This memorandum is executed as of the last date shown below and will be renewed in

FS Agreement No.: 02MU-111005-079

five-year increments unless dissolved by one of the participants. The Sitka Area Trail Plan shall be reviewed by the partners in 2012, progress on plan objectives will be analyzed and community needs assessed. A determination will be made at that time whether to continue, modify, or terminate the plan.

B. Termination, modification, assignment of the parties.

Termination or Suspension: A party to the agreement may terminate their involvement in the agreement by providing the other parties with 30-days advance written notice. In the event that one party provides the other parties with notice of their intent to terminate, the parties will meet promptly to discuss the reasons for the notice and to try to resolve their differences.

Modification: This agreement may only be modified by written modifications, which include mutual consent and signatures of the parties. Request for modifications will be forwarded in writing by one party to the other, enclosing the proposed form of modification, at least fifteen (15) days prior to the proposed date of said modification(s).

Assignment: This agreement may not be assigned in whole or in part from one party to another party without the prior written approval of all parties.

Article 4 – Definitions

“Sitka Area” includes all areas within the boundary of the City and Borough of Sitka or the Sitka Ranger District, whichever is larger.

Article 5 – Standard Clauses

A. Civil Rights: During the performance of this agreement, the participants agree to abide by the terms of USDI-Civil Rights Assurance Certification, non-discrimination and will not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The participants will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

C. Officials Not to Benefit: No member or delegate to Congress, or resident Commissioner, shall be admitted to any share or part of this agreement, or to any benefit that may arise therefrom, but this provision shall not be construed to extend to this agreement if made with a corporation for its general benefit.

D. Public Information Release: The parties must obtain prior Government approval from the appropriate NPS representative for any public information releases which refer to the Department of the Interior, any bureau, park unit, or employee (by name or title), or this agreement. The specific text, layout, photographs, etc., of the proposed release must be submitted with the request for approval.

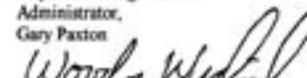
FS Agreement No.: 02MU-111005-079

E. Consistency with Public Laws: Nothing herein contained shall be deemed to be inconsistent with or contrary to the purpose of or intent of any Act of Congress establishing, affecting, or relating to the Agreement.

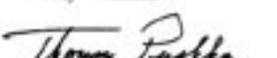
Article 5 – Authorizing signatures


City and Borough of Sitka
Administrator,
Gary Paxton

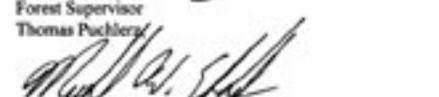
03/12/03
Date


Sitka Tribe of Alaska,
Tribal Chairman,
“Woody” Widmark

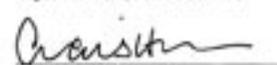
4/25/03
Date


USDA FS, Tongass National Forest
Forest Supervisor
Thomas Puchler

3-12-03
Date


State of Alaska, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
Superintendent, Mike Eberhardt

3/12/03
Date


Sitka Trail Works, Inc.,
President,
Charles Horan

MARCH 12, 2003
Date


USDI, National Park Service, Superintendent,
Sitka National Historical Park
Gary Gauthier

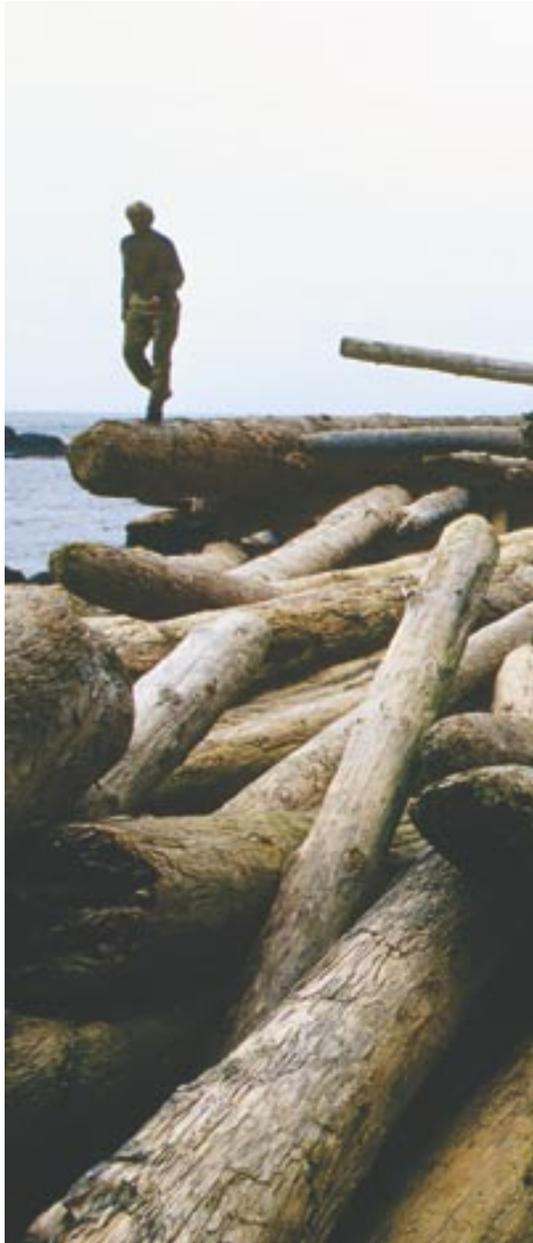
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From an Idea to a Walk in the Woods

When recruiting employees from outside of Sitka I always mention the trails that have been built and improved upon tremendously over the last five years. Several employees have told me they frequent those trails and take family and friends out on them, as I do. I know that getting away from it all in a hike for a day, or even just a few hours, can refresh and help a person refocus on what the important things are in life. That is just one of the reasons to take advantage of our local trails.

**Roger Hames,
President
Hames Corporation**

From Shore to Summit



Chapter III: From Shore to Summit—A Diverse Network of Trails

One of the primary objectives of this plan is to create an exciting system of trails passing through the full range of Southeast Alaska terrain. The following pages offer detailed descriptions and illustrations of trail projects organized by trail type. Trail types are based on location, like Near Town or Coastal trails, or a particular quality, like Cultural Interest trails, or by trail uses, like bicycle or ATV & Snow machine trails

Near Town Trails

Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

- Sawmill Creek Road Improvements
- Sitka Cross Trail Extensions—
- Indian River to Starrigavan
- Indian River to Thimbleberry Lake
- Indian River Trail Connection
- Japonski Island Pathway

Sawmill Cove Loop Trails

- Thimbleberry to Heart Lake
- Herring Cove to Beaver Lake

Cultural Interest Trails

- World War II Causeway
- Lucky Chance Historic Trail
- Sitka Historical Places Walking Tour
- Sitka Cancer Survivors Society “Path of Hope”

Coastal Trails

- South Sitka Sound Trail
- Halibut Point Pedestrian Walkway
- John Brown’s Beach Trail

Alpine Trails

- Harbor Mountain Trails
- Bear Cove to Camp Lake Route

Water Routes

- Magic Island Underwater Dive Trail
- Kayak Harbor Improvements

Bicycle Trails

- Bicycles—Transportation and Recreation
- Single Track Mountain Bike Trail

ATV and Snow machine Trails

- Starrigavan Multi-Use Trail



Sitka Trail Plan Vicinity Map



Map Key

-  Proposed Route
-  Maintained Roadway

Near Town Trails

In response to public demand, near-town trails are being developed in communities all over the United States. They offer close-to-home opportunities for healthy exercise and transportation, as well as improved safety. They can be designed as primitive hiking-only paths through the woods or as more developed multi-use routes that accommodate hikers, bikers, and wheelchair users. As a category, the expansion and refinement of near town trails was the most widely supported of the proposed trail projects.

The Sitka Trail Survey and comments on the Draft Trail Plan indicated that bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists currently perceive an unacceptable risk of danger on pathways immediately adjacent to roadsides. Sitkans

clearly support new multi-use routes that separate human-powered and motorized activities. There is potential in Sitka to develop an interconnected system of transportation trails separate and distinct from city streets that can accommodate bikes, pedestrians and wheelchairs.

Development of a Non-Motorized Transportation Plan is a specialized task best completed by professional consultants with experience in developing multi-use trails in a community design setting. Thanks to the support of the City and Borough of Sitka, and in response to recommendations made in the draft trail plan, this planning and design effort was completed in 2002.

The Sawmill Creek Road Improvements, the Indian River Trail Connection, the Cross Trail Extensions, and the Japonski Island Loop form major design elements of the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.

This plan supports development of a Sawmill Creek Road multi-use separated pathway for pedestrians and bicyclists as the highest priority project for transportation improvements in Sitka. This plan strongly supported an extension of the existing Cross Trail to provide a forested route for bicyclists and pedestrians from one end of town to the other. The trail location would generally run parallel to the shoreline but would run behind Sitka neighborhoods along the base of the mountains. Short neighborhood connector trails to the Cross Trail were also supported in public comment.

Analysis of comments on the draft plan suggests that a new loop trail complex be created adjacent to the former pulp mill site southeast of downtown Sitka. The Sawmill Cove Loop Trails have great potential to offer new winter and summer recreation opportunities. These trails will complement Whale Park, the Sawmill Creek Campground, the proposed Herring Cove Park, and will increase the attractiveness and appeal of the Sawmill Cove Industrial Site. This new loop complex will balance nicely with the Starrigavan Trails located northwest of downtown Sitka

and will disperse recreation. The Sawmill Cove Loop Trails will be formed by extending the Thimbleberry Lake Trail to Heart Lake, by connecting Heart Lake to Blue Lake Road, and by connecting the Beaver Lake Trail from Blue Lake Road over to Herring Cove.

Public and agency comments on the draft trail plan recommended two additional projects for inclusion in the Near Town Trails category: The Sitka Historical Places Walking Tour and the Sitka Cancer Survivors Society "Path of Hope".



Near Town Trails

Sawmill Creek Road Improvements	
Total Length	Approx. 6.5 miles
Difficulty Level	Easy to moderate
Trail Surface	Paved or boardwalk pathway separated from traffic where possible
Uses	Walking, running, bicycling & wheelchair

Project Description

Sawmill Creek Road is slated for major reconstruction and improvements as a State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities project. This project has been the number one priority for the lead agency, the City and Borough of Sitka for several years. Local government, businesses, and the public unanimously support correction of the deplorable safety risks to pedestrians and bicyclists that exist along the current route. This route is used heavily by both pedestrians and bicyclists in the vicinity of the Raptor Center and the Sitka National Historical Park, as well as along the Thimbleberry Bay and Silver Bay portions of the road. Sitkans have indicated a strong preference for a separate bike path, rather than a bike lane. Such a path would provide increased safety to pedestrians and wheelchairs and would provide a higher quality experience by taking advantage of the waterfront vistas along Silver Bay.

Public needs met

Thoughtful improvements to Sawmill Creek Road will dramatically improve public safety and recreation opportunities for Sitkans and visitors in a number of ways. A pedestrian crossing that passes over

Sawmill Creek Road Improvements

or under the road in the vicinity of the Indian River Trail could greatly relieve a summer time safety issue associated with tourists visiting the Raptor Center, the Sitka National Historical Park and the Indian River Trail. As traffic to the Sawmill Cove Industrial Park increases, safety improvements to protect pedestrians and bicyclists traveling the twisty undulations of the road along Silver Bay become more critical. Sawmill Creek Road also forms an important link as part of the Sawmill Cove Loop Trails and will be used by cross country athletes and participants in the annual Whale Festival Fun Run.

Planning and Design

This project is currently in the planning phase by the State of Alaska Department of Transportation. Planners will be working in Sitka during 2002-2003.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: City & Borough of Sitka.

Project Participants: Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

Preliminary Cost Estimate

Costs are to be determined after the pathway location and standards are devised.



Elements of the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

Sawmill Creek Road Improvements

Map Key

-  Proposed Trail
-  Existing Trail
-  Road

Near Town Trails

Sitka Cross Trail Extension – Indian River to Starrigavan

Sitka Cross Trail Extension–Indian River to Starrigavan	
Total Length	6 miles
Difficulty Level	Easy, partially ADA accessible
Trail Surface	Gravel & boardwalk

Project Description

The Sitka Cross Trail Extensions have been discussed and dreamed about for many years and have emerged as the overwhelming favorite candidates for expansion of the existing near town trail system. Public comments on the draft plan, along with historic comments on previous planning documents, indicate strong community support to extend the Cross Trail northwest to the Starrigavan Trail complex and southeast to the Thimbleberry Lake Trail. Completion of this trail will create multiple access points to Sitka’s neighborhoods and will connect the Cross Trail to other trails.

Public Needs Met

The Cross Trail extensions will compose a major element of a well-integrated alternative transportation system for both pedestrians and bicyclists. This will greatly expand and enhance public opportunities for transportation, exercise and recreation in a safe and aesthetically pleasing environment. Multiple access points along the trail will facilitate use

by people living all along its route. One objective of the Sitka Cross Trail project is to upgrade the trail tread over the entire Cross Trail length for use by bicyclists. Several sections of this trail could also be constructed to ADA standards in order to increase accessibility to the trail by more members of the community. The entire proposed Cross Trail route is a designated SEATrail. It will provide an important transportation route for visitors arriving via the Alaska State Ferries. The Cross Trail will allow them to bike or hike to recreation sites, campgrounds and other visitor destinations like the Sitka National Historical Park and the Alaska Raptor Center.

Planning and Design

Preliminary design standards and route location recommendations were made as part of the Sitka Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: City & Borough of Sitka.

Project participants: USDA Forest Service, Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, Federal Highways Administration, Sheldon Jackson College, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, University of Alaska Land Trust, Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources Div. of Parks & Outdoor Recreation, Alaska Mental Health Lands Trust, STW.

Sitka Cross Trail Extension–Indian River to Starrigavan			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Trail Tread	6 miles	\$75.0/lf	\$2,375.0
Bridges	15	\$1,500/ea	\$23.0
Signs & Information			\$20.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$350.0
Total Projected Cost			\$2,768.0

**Elements of the Non-Motorized
Transportation Plan**

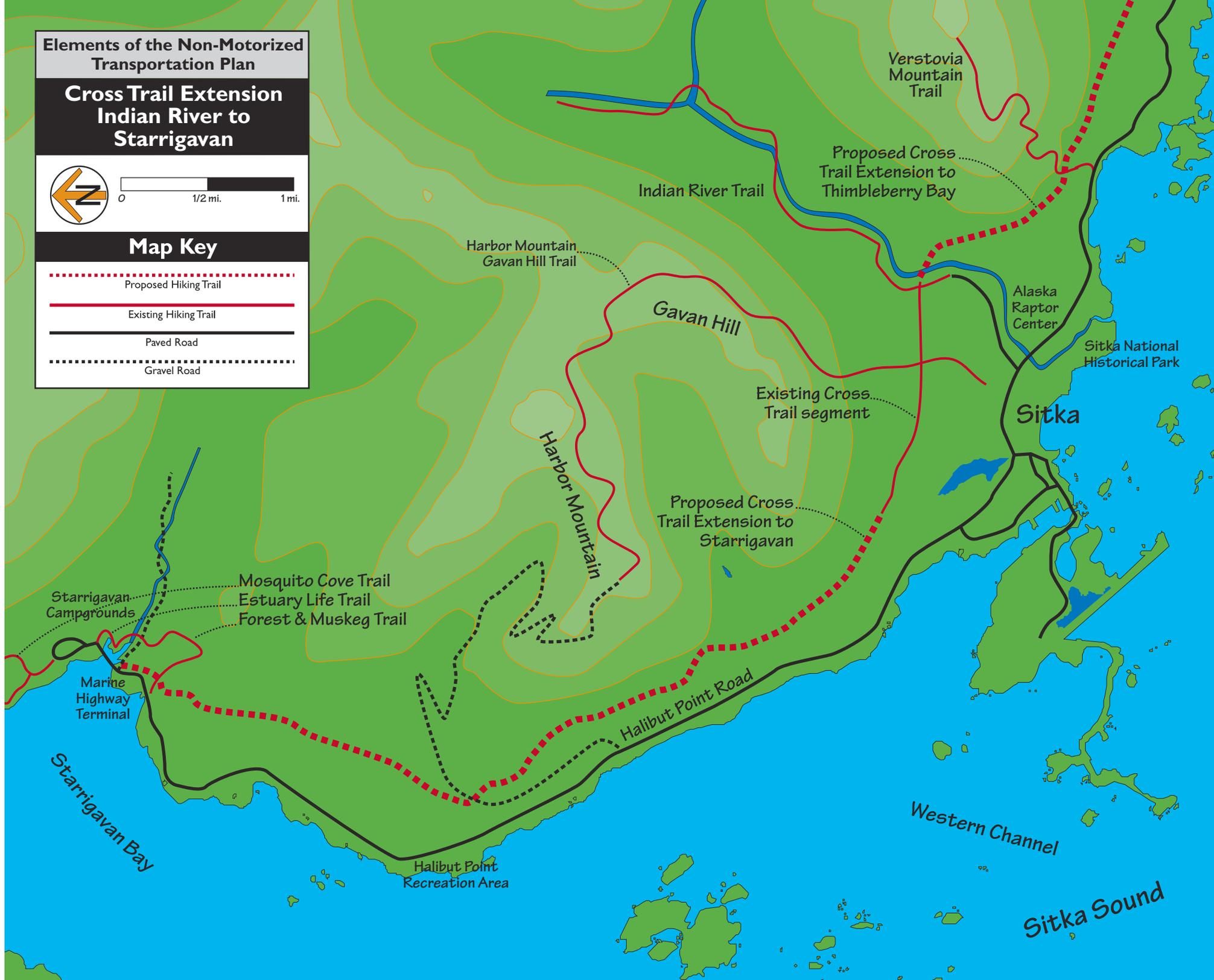
**Cross Trail Extension
Indian River to
Starrigavan**



0 1/2 mi. 1 mi.

Map Key

- Proposed Hiking Trail
- Existing Hiking Trail
- Paved Road
- Gravel Road



Near Town Trails

Sitka Cross Trail Extension – Indian River to Thimbleberry Lake

Sitka Cross Trail Extension—Indian River to Thimbleberry	
Total Length	3 miles
Difficulty Level	Easy to challenging
Trail Surface	Gravel & boardwalk

Project Description

The Sitka Cross Trail Extensions have been discussed and dreamed about for many years and have emerged as the overwhelming favorite candidates for expansion of the existing near town trail system. Public comments on the draft plan, along with historic comments on previous planning documents, indicate strong community support to extend the Cross Trail northwest to the Starrigavan Trail complex and southeast to the Thimbleberry Lake Trail. Completion of this trail will create multiple access points to Sitka’s neighborhoods and will connect the Cross Trail to other trails.

The Indian River to Thimbleberry portion of the Cross Trail would connect neighborhoods as it meanders through a broad valley of low-lying muskeg north of Indian River and rising 500 feet through forest and old growth, skirting the lower part of Mt. Verstovia.

Public Needs Met

The Cross Trail extensions will compose a major element of a well-integrated alternative transportation system for both pedestrians and bicyclists. This will greatly expand and enhance public opportunities for transportation, exercise and recreation in a safe and aesthetically pleasing environment. Multiple access points along the trail will facilitate use by people living all along its route. One objective of the Sitka Cross Trail project is to upgrade the trail tread over the entire

Cross Trail length for use by bicyclists. Sections of this trail could also be constructed to ADA standards in order to increase accessibility to the trail by more members of the community. The entire proposed Cross Trail route is a designated SEATrail. It will provide an important transportation route for visitors arriving via the Alaska State Ferries. The Cross Trail will allow them to bike or hike to recreation sites, campgrounds and other visitor destinations like the Sitka National Historical Park and the Raptor Center.

Planning and Design

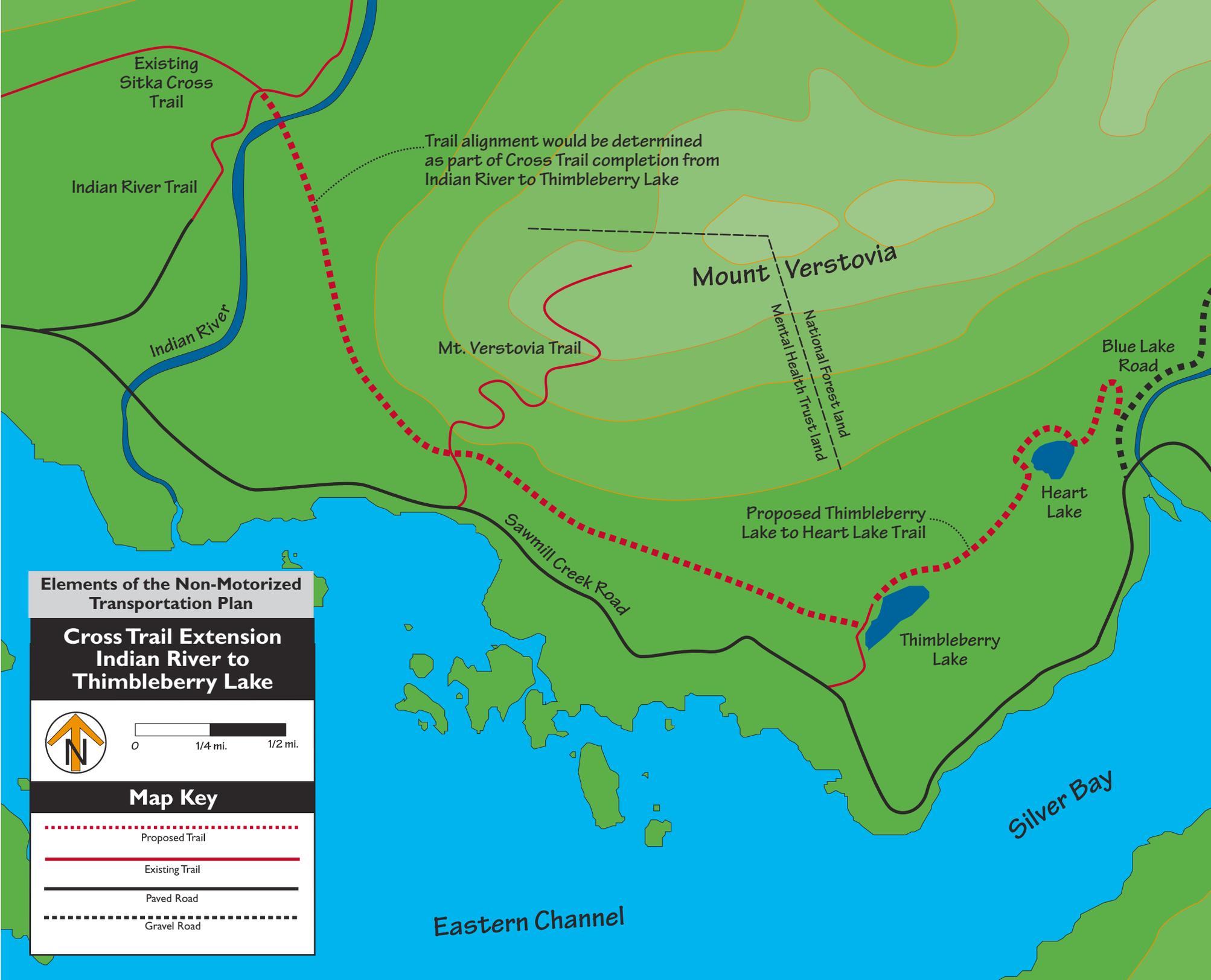
General design standards and approximate route location have been recommended for the Cross Trail in the Sitka Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. Detailed construction designs still need to be developed. A re-route of the Cross Trail to bring it closer to neighborhoods between Yaw Drive and Sitka High School has been recommended.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: City & Borough of Sitka.

Project participants. Portions of this proposed trail are on City & Borough of Sitka land. Most of the trail crosses Alaska Mental Health Trust and National Forest lands. The trail also passes near private property.

Sitka Cross Trail Extension—Indian River to Thimbleberry Lake			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Trail Tread	3 miles	\$55.00/lf	\$870.0
Bridges	3	\$16,500/ea.	\$50.0
Signs & Information			\$20.0
Trailhead Parking	2	\$30,000/ea.	\$60.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$150.0
Total Projected Cost			\$1,150.0



Existing Sitka Cross Trail

Indian River Trail

Indian River

Trail alignment would be determined as part of Cross Trail completion from Indian River to Thimbleberry Lake

Mount Verstovia

Mt. Verstovia Trail

National Forest land
Mental Health Trust land

Blue Lake Road

Heart Lake

Proposed Thimbleberry Lake to Heart Lake Trail

Thimbleberry Lake

Sawmill Creek Road

Silver Bay

Eastern Channel

Elements of the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

**Cross Trail Extension
Indian River to
Thimbleberry Lake**

Map Key

-  Proposed Trail
-  Existing Trail
-  Paved Road
-  Gravel Road

Near Town Trails

Sitka Cross Trail Extension – Indian River Trail Connection

Indian River Trail Connection	
Total Length	1 mile
Difficulty Level	Easy
Trail Surface	Gravel

Project Description

One of the goals of the Sitka Trail Plan is to extend and connect existing trails and to provide routes for walking and alternate transportation. The Indian River Trail Connection would create an important link in this transportation system. It could use the existing route along the water flume and the corridor along Indian River to access the Indian River Trail, Sitka National Historic Park, the Cross Trail, and the Alaska Raptor Rehabilitation Center. It could be designed for bikes or for pedestrians only. This project would allow the public access to one of the most beautiful sections of Indian River.

A single-track mountain bike area is proposed for future development adjacent to the trail connection.

Planning and Design

The City & Borough of Sitka has received grant funds for an Indian River Trail Corridor Management Plan. The plan will be developed in 2003. Dialogue and coordination with all the potentially affected parties is needed. These parties include Sheldon Jackson College, the Sitka National Historical Park, the Alaska Raptor Center, the City and Borough of Sitka, the Alaska Department of Transportation and adjacent area residents and commercial businesses. There has also been discussion in the community about establishing an Indian River Watershed Council. Construction-ready plans for new trailhead were completed by the City & Borough of Sitka in the Fall of 2002 using a grant from the Federal Highways Administration. The plan is for a new trailhead location and 1,600 feet of trail.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: City & Borough of Sitka.

Project participants: Sitka National Historical Park, the Raptor Center, Sitka Trail Works, Inc., Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, Sheldon Jackson College, Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Preliminary Cost Estimate

Costs are to be determined after the trail location and standards are devised.

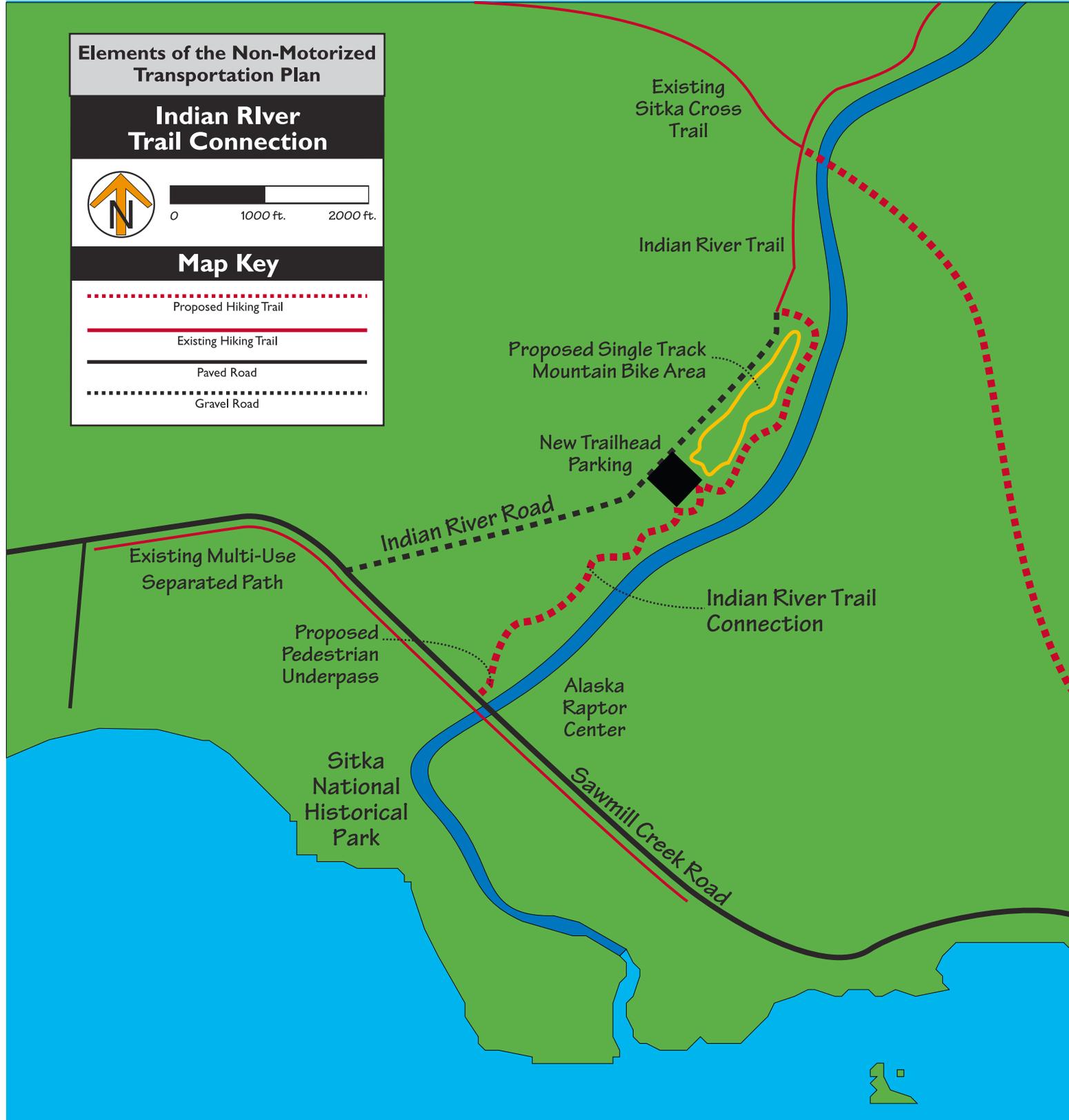
Elements of the Non-Motorized
Transportation Plan

Indian River
Trail Connection



Map Key

- Proposed Hiking Trail
- Existing Hiking Trail
- Paved Road
- Gravel Road



Near Town Trails

Japonski Island Pathway	
Total Length	Approx. 2 miles
Difficulty Level	Easy
Trail Surface	Gravel, separated asphalt & road shoulder

Project Description

The concept of a Japonski loop multi use pathway has been discussed for many years and the City & Borough of Sitka has requested that this project be included in the Trail Plan. Federal construction projects on Japonski Island make inclusion of a walk, run & bike, Japonski Island Loop Trail particularly timely. Airport improvements are planned on Japonski Island including runway expansion and road re-alignment projects. The USCG Air Station Sitka base is also under going construction activities related to post September 11th security issues. As a result of security concerns the USCG now limits public access to the base. The airport access road relocation will impact recreational use. Community residents are extremely interested in a new design which will result in no net loss of recreation opportunities.

Public Needs Met

Unsafe conditions that exist on the island, and that are identified in the non-motorized transportation plan, will be resolved with the construction of a bikeway/pedestrian pathway. In addition to Sitka residents and visitors, several special public groups would be well served by the construction and designation of a pedestrian/bicycle loop on the island. As home to numerous USCG personnel the loop would provide immediate access to recreational opportunities

Japonski Island Pathway

for families of servicemen and women. The servicemen and women themselves will utilize the route for physical conditioning. Students attending Mt. Edgecumbe High School and the University of Alaska Southeast will utilize the loop for exercise and fun. Alaska Natives from throughout Southeast in residential treatment at the SEARHC facilities will experience the physical benefits of using the routes for exercise and relaxation, an important adjunct to the treatment programs. The Japonski loop route will connect with the existing John Brown's Beach Trail, located on the USCG property.

Planning and Design

Portions of the Japonski Loop are being planned a part of the FAA airport expansion and also the USCG base reconstruction. Recently the City & Borough of Sitka, with the help of affected land owners, developed a future infrastructure plan for Japonski Island. A dialogue among land owners on a future pathway location will be necessary to determine the pathway route. A new route which avoids crossing Mt. Edgecumbe High School and USCG Air Station Sitka property may need to be developed.

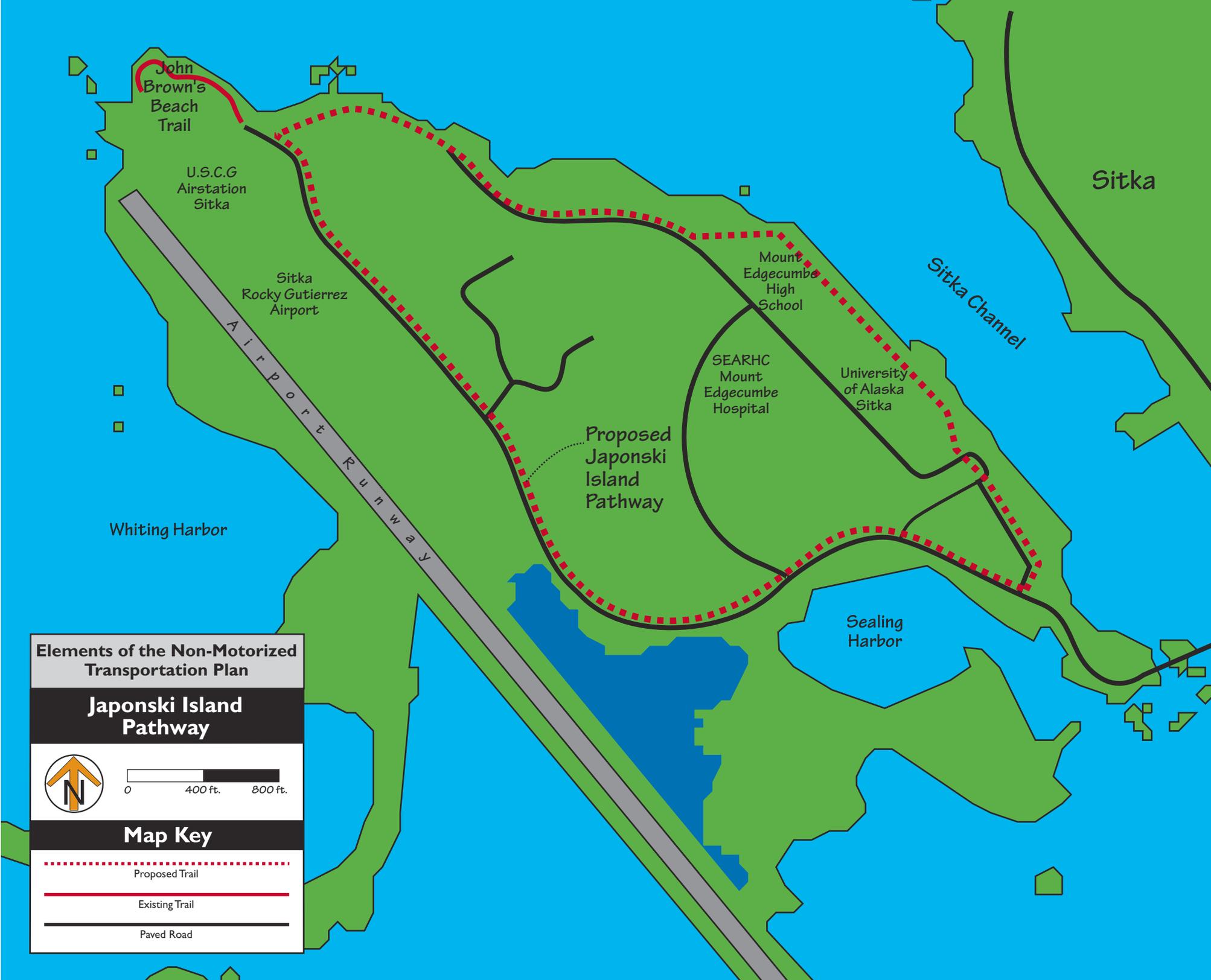
Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: City & Borough of Sitka.

Project participants: Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, USCG Air Station Sitka, Federal Aviation Administration, Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Preliminary Cost Estimate

Costs are to be determined after the trail location and standards are devised.



Elements of the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

Japonski Island Pathway

Map Key

-  Proposed Trail
-  Existing Trail
-  Paved Road

Near Town Trails

Sawmill Cove Loop Trails – Thimbleberry Lake to Heart Lake

Thimbleberry Lake to Heart Lake	
Total Length	1.7 miles
Difficulty Level	Easy to moderate
Trail Surface	Gravel

Project Description

This multiple-use trail will extend the Thimbleberry Lake Trail 1.7 miles to Blue Lake road via Heart Lake and will create a loop trail, returning to the Thimbleberry Lake Trail parking lot along Sawmill Creek road. The route to Heart Lake will generally follow the existing trail along the power line easement across solid, mineral soil. It may be possible to reroute the descent from Heart Lake to the Blue Lake road along the old pioneered route on USFS land. A 24-inch wide gravel trail similar to the existing Thimbleberry Lake Trail will be easy enough for family outings, yet it could also be used by bicyclists. A single-track mountain bike loop could be developed on Forest Service bench lands to the west of the lakes, as a future complement to the trail. New cross-country ski areas would become available with these improvements to the Thimbleberry to Heart Lake route.

Public Needs Met

Responses to the Draft Trail Plan indicate that multiple use loop trails constructed to the standard of the Mosquito Cove Trail and the existing Thimbleberry Lake Trail are extremely popular with residents and visitors. The improved trail will allow ice skaters and fishers to access Heart Lake.

Currently, winter recreation sites along the Sitka Road System are limited and cross-country ski opportunities are almost non-existent. The improved trail will expand winter and summer recreation options and will accommodate use by hikers, ice skaters, bicyclists, cross country runners, skiers, and fishers.

Trails suitable for bikes in Sitka are currently very limited. Most trails are closed to bikes because tires could damage them or because insufficient sight distance creates hazardous situations. This route, however, has better mineral soils and good sight distances, making it well suited to bikes. Hikers will also benefit from the trail.

The existing trail from Blue Lake road to Heart Lake was built by the Alaska Pulp Corporation to access their equipment at Heart Lake. The boardwalk steps and trail are collapsing, unsafe, and a liability for the City. This project would repair the trail, which provides access to some of the best berry picking in Sitka.

Reconstruction of the trail will also allow for remediation of a large mudslide that occurred in 2002 and improve access to the powerline corridor.

Planning and Design

A design narrative for the project was developed as a partnership between USDA Forest Service Region 10 and Sitka Trail Works in the fall of 2002. The project is on the USDA FS CIP list and is slated for funding in 2006. Partnership funds supplied by City and Borough of Sitka will pay for complete design work in 2004. Partnership funding from a private foundation is being requested for non-national forest trail construction in 2005.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.
 Project Participants: City & Borough of Sitka, USDA FS, Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities, University of Alaska Lands, STA.

Thimbleberry Lake to Heart Lake Trail	
Items	Total (x 1,000)
Survey, Design & Contract Preparation	\$17.7
Trail Construction on National Forest Lands	\$315.2
Trail Construction on non National Forest Lands	\$134.8
Total	\$467.7

Sawmill Cove Loop Trails

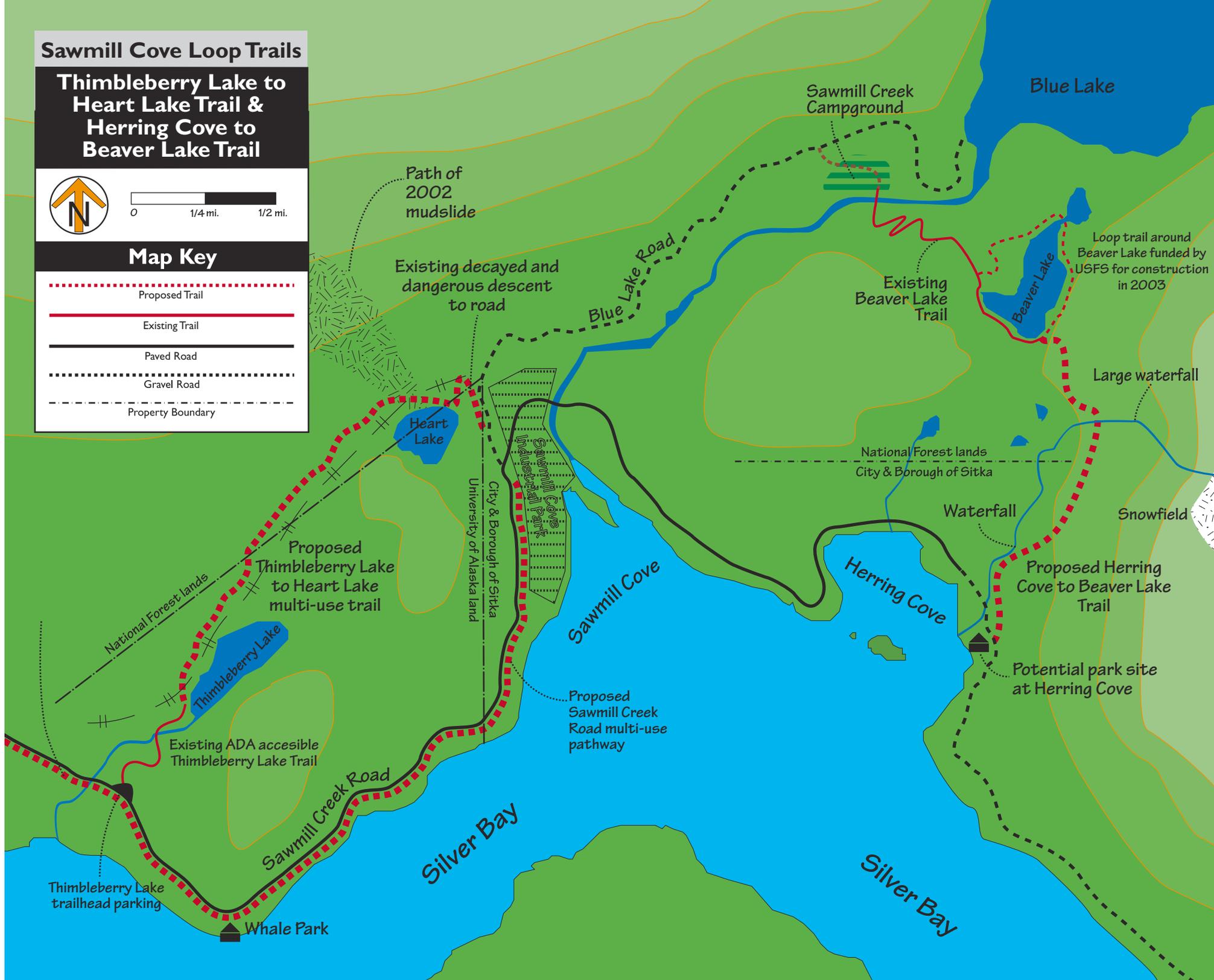
Thimbleberry Lake to Heart Lake Trail & Herring Cove to Beaver Lake Trail



0 1/4 mi. 1/2 mi.

Map Key

- Proposed Trail
- Existing Trail
- Paved Road
- Gravel Road
- Property Boundary



Near Town Trails

Sawmill Cove Loop Trails — Herring Cove to Beaver Lake

Herring Cove to Beaver Lake Trail	
Total Length	1.25 miles
Difficulty Level	Moderate
Trail Surface	Gravel, log steps, boardwalk

Project Description

This new pedestrian only trail will connect the proposed park at Herring Cove to Beaver Lake. This segment will join with Blue Lake Road to create a 5-mile long loop hike. The route will pass through beautiful muskegs and along small lakes and rock outcroppings. It will also afford spectacular views of Bear Mountain and two waterfalls.

Public Needs Met

This trail will increase opportunities for exercise and family recreation. The trail will be used heavily in the winter for snow shoeing, skiing and ice-skating on Beaver Lake and other ponds in that area. Fragile muskeg and boggy areas are presently suffering damage from hikers using the existing primitive route to Herring Cove. Trail improvements will help end damage to the area muskegs.

Planning and Design

A design narrative report would provide field verified cost estimates and preliminary design. The required National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) planning will proceed from the information in this report and informed decisions could be made. Detailed design and construction would follow this step. The City & Borough of Sitka owns a corridor of land above Herring Cove, which encompasses almost half of the trail. The USDA Forest Service manages the rest of the land. Trail planning and construction would be organized by these agencies.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.
 Project Participants: City & Borough of Sitka, USDA FS, Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities, University of Alaska Lands, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, private foundation.

Herring Cove to Beaver Lake Trail			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Trail Tread	1.25 miles	\$30.0/lf	\$198.0
Signs & Information			\$1.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$35.0
Total Projected Cost			\$234.0

Cultural Interest Trails

The results of the Sitka Trail Survey and public comments on the Draft Trail Plan indicated strong support for trails that convey components of area history. Efforts to enhance the appreciation of cultural landmarks, historical places and architecture elicited broad approval. Of the people who responded to the survey, 84% supported urban historic trails and 76% supported backcountry historic trails. Comments on the draft plan also showed fully 50% of the respondents ranking the WWII Causeway projects and the Lucky Chance Mine project as priority projects for the community. Members of the public also suggested two cultural interest trail projects for inclusion in the Trail Plan, the Historical Walking Tour of Downtown Sitka and the Sitka Cancer Survivors Society “Path of Hope”.

Many Sitka residents do not realize the significance of the Lucky Chance Mine/Salmon Lake mining district to the history of mining in Alaska. The Lucky Chance claims were the first major hard-rock mines developed in the state. A trail in this location has great potential for enhancing recreation in Sitka because it would be possible to connect the trail to the Sitka road system at the end of the Green Lake road. This proposal would create a multi-day hiking trail connected to the Sitka road system.

Upper Terminal & Entrance to
Lucky Chance Mine
Lake is frozen quite a part of year.



Sitka Historical Society (photograph and handwriting by Dean Willard Richards, circa 1900)

Cultural Interest Trails

World War II Causeway

World War II Causeway	
Total Length	1 mile
Difficulty Level	Easy, ADA accessible
Trail Surface	Varies
Associated facilities	Interpretive signs, Whiting Harbor float & reconstructed WWII implacements

Project Description

The Sitka World War II causeway has the potential to be the best and most informative World War II historic walk in Southeast Alaska. Users of this trail would be able to explore fascinating underground ammunition bunkers or stand on a gun platform and look out to the open ocean. The Causeway Trail has commercial potential as a destination for independent visitors and cruise ship passengers.

A floating dock facility at Whiting Harbor is proposed and the causeway would be developed to wheelchair accessible standards. The causeway riprap would be repaired where needed. A survey of World War II artifacts would be prepared to guide the development of the trail and its interpretation. Tours could be offered during the summer.

Public Needs Met

This trail would be a monument to one of the significant periods in Sitka’s history. It would

be available year-round to residents and would provide an historical excursion for visitors. The Sitka Americans with Disabilities Act Committee has placed a high priority on completing this project.

Planning and Design

Planning would include the completion of a cultural resource survey and completion of the necessary permits. Negotiations with the landowner, the Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources, would also be needed. A topographic survey, design of the float, trails, and interpretive materials would follow.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.
 Project participants: Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, City & Borough of Sitka, Sitka Historic Preservation Society, commercial users, State Historic Preservation Officer.

World War II Causeway			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Trail Construction	1 mile		\$135.0
Signs, Information & literature			\$40.0
Whiting Harbor Float			\$300.0
Causeway Riprap Repair			\$200.0
Historical Restoration & Improvements			\$150.0
Vault Toilet			\$75.0
Contingency			\$100.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$150.0
Total Projected Cost			\$1,150.0

The Sitka Causeway WWII Historic Site



Map Key

- Proposed Hiking Trail
- Maintained Roadway
- Airport Runway
- Proposed Structure
- Existing Structure
- Buildings



Sitka Sound

Cultural Interest Trails

Lucky Chance Mine Historic Trail

Lucky Chance Mine Historic Trail	
Total Length	19-mile loop
Difficulty Level	40% easy, 40% moderate, 20% challenging
Trail Surface	Requires study
Associated facilities	Three alpine huts, interpretive material

Project Description

This project would create a loop trail from two existing historic trails—the Lucky Chance Mine and the Salmon Lake trails. Hikers would be able to see historic remnants first-hand as they follow the same route used by miners who hauled ore from the first major hard rock mine in Alaska. The Lucky Chance claims were the first major hard-rock mines developed in the state. The scenery along the route is spectacular, with superb old-growth forests, alpine lakes, muskegs and narrow gorges with waterfalls. The trip would be a two or three-day hike with stops at proposed alpine camping huts or at existing Forest Service cabins. The Lucky Chance Trail could be connected to the Sitka road system if a hiking link can be established that provided a crossing of the Green Lake Dam outfall.

Public Needs Met

This trail meets a number of desires expressed in the Sitka Trail Survey. The route offers hiking in the alpine and coastal zones. It also presents the opportunity for multi-day trips that offer a degree of physical challenge. Survey respondents and comments on the draft plan

demonstrated strong support for trails with historical content. An additional advantage is that this trail would be accessible to the Green Lake road.

This trail concept meets several criteria identified by the Trail Committee as desirable in a new trail. These include accessibility to the Sitka road system and day hike or multi-day hiking and camping options. Two existing Forest Service cabins would become accessible to the road system. This trail is of great historical interest. It would also serve as a year-round trail with winter sports possibilities.

Planning and Design

The trail needs to be surveyed. Conceptual design and cost estimates need to be done. A way of crossing Green Creek needs to be developed.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.
 Project participants: USDA Forest Service, City & Borough of Sitka, Federal Energy and Regulatory Commission, Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Lucky Chance Mine Historic Trail			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
New Trail Construction	14 miles	\$25.00/lf	\$1,850.0
Old Trail Construction	5 miles	\$10.00/lf	\$265.0
Alpine Huts	3	\$45,000/ea	\$135.0
Green Lake Outfall Bridge	1	\$200,000	\$200.0
Signs, Information & Literature			\$35.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$150.0
Total Projected Cost			\$2,635.0



The Lucky Chance Historic Trail



Map Key

- Proposed Hiking Trail
- Existing Hiking Trail
- Maintained Roadway
- Unimproved Road (No Vehicle Access)
- Property Boundary
- Proposed Structure
- Existing Structure
- A Anchorage
- Buildings

Cultural Interest Trails

Historical Walking Tour of Downtown Sitka	
Total Length	2 miles
Difficulty Level	Easy
Trail Surface	Varied—largely paved
Associated facilities	Introductory kiosk interpretive signs, color brochure, web site

Project Description

This walking tour of downtown Sitka would connect the many historic sites of the City’s commercial, waterfront district. It will provide visitors with a comprehensive overview of community history by including sites that reflect all eras of Sitka history including Native, Russian and American. The trail would begin at an informational kiosk in the center of town where visitors would be directed along a two-mile circuit bounded by Sitka National Historical Park and the National Cemetery to the south, The Cable House to the west, and the Alaska Native Brotherhood Hall to the North. Approximately 15 historic sites would be included in the tour, which would take 1.5 to 2 hours to complete.

Where needed (some sites are already labeled) interpretive signs would be installed to identify the sites and provide a brief summary of their historic relevance. Tour takers would also be provided with a full-color brochure with a trail map and site information. Brochures would be stocked at the introductory kiosk and passed out by the Sitka Convention and Visitors Bureau information desk. To enhance the tour’s educational impact, additional information on Sitka’s historic sites would be posted on a well illustrated web page connected to the Sitka Convention and Visitor’s Bureau web site.

Historical Walking Tour of Downtown Sitka

Public Needs Met

Sitka’s downtown area holds a wealth of historic sites important to local, state, national and international history. These sites are a central part of our communities’ character and a major visitor attraction, yet there is no single publication that unites these sites into a comprehensive account of local history. The proposed walking tour would tie the existing cultural resources together and assist visitors in exploring Sitka history from a more holistic point of view. The Sitka Historic Preservation Commission has placed a high priority on completing this project.

Planning and Design

The Sitka Historic Preservation Commission in consultation with the city’s Parks and Recreation Department would undertake project planning and design. As the historic sites in downtown Sitka are owned and managed by a variety of State and Federal agencies, private organizations, and individuals, site owners would be consulted about the inclusion of their property in the tour.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.
Project participants: Sitka Historic Preservation Society, City & Borough of Sitka, Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Historical Walking Tour of Downtown Sitka			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Kiosk Construction	1	\$15,000/ea	\$15.0
Interpretive Materials & Web Support	15	\$1,000/ea	\$15.0
Signage			\$12.3
Planning & Design			\$3.0
Total Projected Cost			\$45.3

Sitka Cancer Survivors Society "Path of Hope"

Cultural Interest Trails

Sitka Cancer Survivors Society "Path of Hope"	
Total Length	Approx. 1/2-mile
Difficulty Level	Easy, partially ADA accessible
Trail Surface	Gravel
Associated facilities	Gazebo, benches, public art & inspirational plaques

Project Description

The Sitka Cancer Survivors Society, a local non-profit organization plans to construct a short interpretive trail called "The Path of Hope" in an undeveloped section of Moller Park between the track and Swan Lake. The atmosphere of the trail will be aesthetically pleasing, inspirational and serene. The group plans to place benches and plaques with inspirational messages about fighting cancer and other life challenges. Modeled after the Bloch Foundation Cancer Survivors Parks in the lower 48, the "Path of Hope" will be designed to uplift and inspire members of the community and visitors.

Public Needs Met

Medical research has shown that a positive mental attitude and an unshakable belief that the disease can be conquered are important contributors to survivorship. The "Path of

Hope Cancer Survivors Park" signs will continually reinforce the message to members of the community that individuals can and do survive this disease.

Planning and Design

This project has been approved by the Sitka Parks and Recreation Committee. The preliminary design could be rendered by the City and Borough of Sitka staff. The Sitka Cancer Survivors Society has received a \$10,000 TRAAK grant for the project.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.

Project participants: Sitka Cancer Survivors Society, City & Borough of Sitka, Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Sitka Cancer Survivors Society "Path of Hope"			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Trail Tread	1,000 ft	\$20.00/lf	\$20.0
Entrance Sign	1	\$2,000/ea	\$2.0
Plaques	7	\$600/ea	\$4.2
Benches & Pad	7	\$1,500/ea	\$12.3
Gazebo			\$20.0
Landscaping			\$15.0
Public Art			\$10.0
Planning & Design			\$3.0
Total Projected Cost			\$86.5

It's helpful to have trails along the road system. They allow people to get out more than they would otherwise. They can get a feel for the outdoors, see wildlife and the big trees around them. It's a good way to connect with the environment, which people might not do if there weren't trails. I think trails are more important for residents than for visitors. People who live here often don't take the opportunity or the time to get outdoors. Easy-access trails make them more interested in exploring and hiking.

**Brian McNitt,
Campaign Director
Alaska Rainforest Campaign**

One of the questions posed in the Sitka Trail Survey was “Are there particular environments where you would like to use new trails?” Answers to this question indicated that ocean coastal trails are the most preferred trails. They offer exceptionally scenic hiking opportunities with little climbing, longer snow-free seasons and exposure to the ocean environment that makes Southeast Alaska so special. Unfortunately, few existing trails follow the coast for any significant length.

Three coastal trails are included in this plan. One wilderness-quality remote trail on Baranof Island, the South Sitka Sound trail, will provide opportunities for overnight back packing trips, as well as day hikes within a reasonable boating distance of Sitka. One urban coastal trail extending the paths along the Halibut Point Recreation area the full length of the park boundary, and one semi-developed hiking trail offering privacy and solitude on Japonski Island, the John Brown’s Beach Trail.

The South Kruzof Coastal Trail proposed in the Draft Trail Plan was not included, based on public comment. (See the Public Comments Table at the end of this document.)



Coastal Trails

South Sitka Sound Trail

South Sitka Sound Trail	
Total Length	17 miles
Difficulty Level	Easy to moderate
Trail Surface	Gravel & boardwalk

Project Description

Formerly called the Baranof Coastal Trail, this three- or four-day backpacking trail would follow a scenic rocky coastline on the south side of Sitka Sound, passing rivers, lakes and mountainsides. Portions of the shoreline in this area receive ocean swell, resulting in a dynamic and ecologically rich inter-tidal zone. Camping shelters would be constructed at strategic locations for hikers and beach campers. This trail will provide an exceptionally unique and beautiful hiking experience. The proposed trail follows the outer coast from Kanga Bay to Big Bay, looping back to Kanga Bay via Redoubt Lake. This trail would consist of two loops and a multi-day hiking trail returning to Kanga Bay.

Public Needs Met

Coastal hiking trails were the top priority for new trail development according to respondents to the 1999/2000 Sitka Trails Survey. Development of this trail would serve residents and visitors. Local kayak

rentals would allow destination travel visitors to enjoy the trail. Many of Sitka’s independent visitors arrive “touring” Southeast waters in private vessels and these individuals, as well as small tour ship guests, could also take advantage of day hiking opportunities by utilizing the nearby anchorages in proximity to the proposed trail route.

Planning and Design

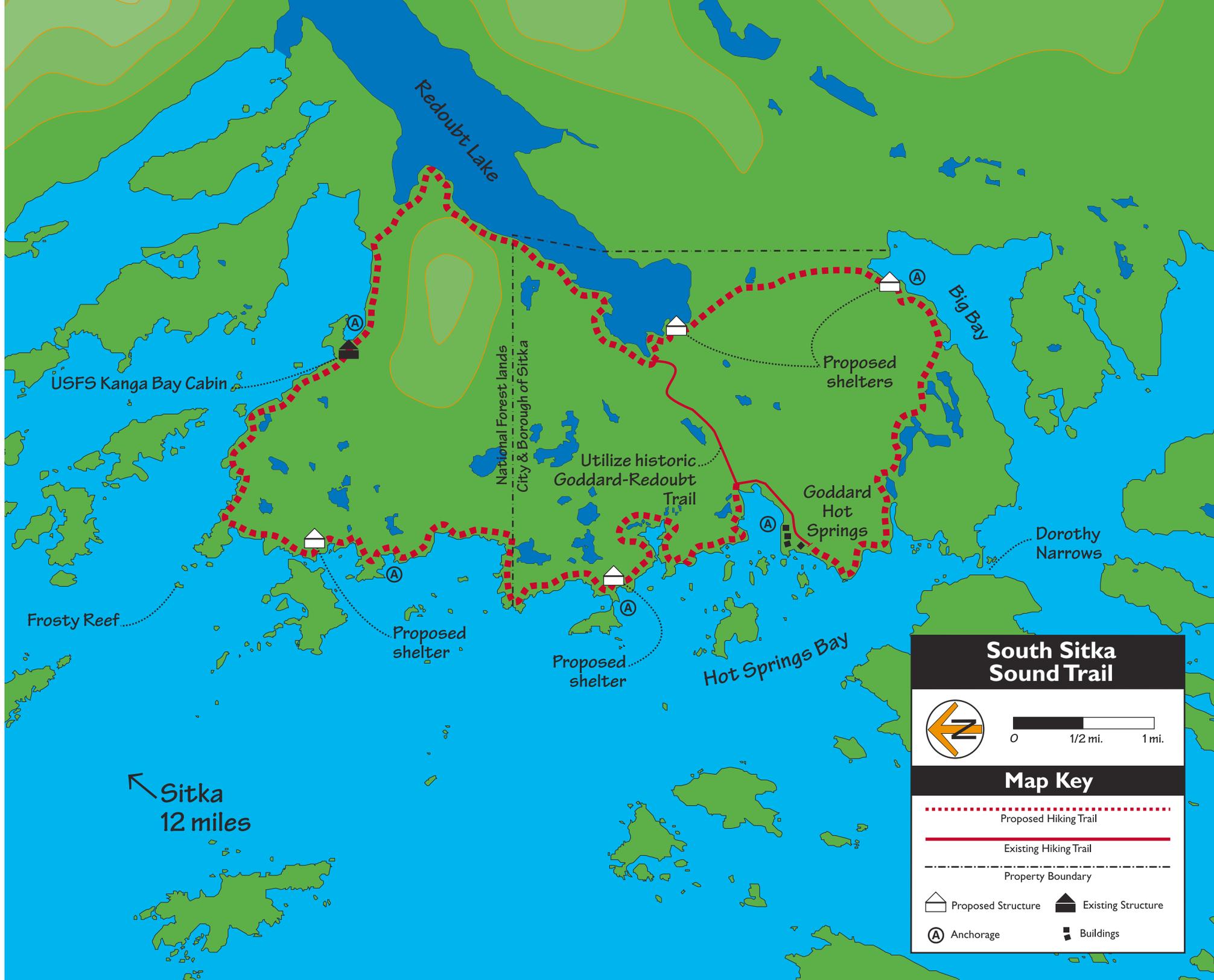
A design narrative report would provide field verified cost estimates and preliminary design. The required NEPA planning (on Federal lands) could proceed from the information in this report and informed decisions could be made about whether and how to proceed. This step would be followed by development of detailed design plans and construction costs estimates.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.

Project participants: Sitka Tribe of Alaska, City & Borough of Sitka, USDA Forest Service.

South Sitka Sound Trail			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Trail Tread	17 miles	\$25/lf	\$2,245.0
Camping Shelters	3	\$35,000/ea	\$105.0
Signs & Information			\$20.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$240.0
Total Projected Cost			\$2,611.0



Redoubt Lake

Big Bay

USFS Kanga Bay Cabin

National Forest lands
City & Borough of Sitka

Utilize historic
Goddard-Redoubt
Trail

Proposed shelters

Goddard
Hot Springs

Dorothy
Narrows

Frosty Reef

Proposed shelter

Proposed shelter

Hot Springs Bay

← Sitka
12 miles

South Sitka Sound Trail





Map Key

- Proposed Hiking Trail
- Existing Hiking Trail
- Property Boundary
-  Proposed Structure

 Existing Structure
-  Anchorage

 Buildings

Coastal Trails

Halibut Point Pedestrian Walkway

Halibut Point Pedestrian Walkway	
Total Length	1 mile
Difficulty Level	Easy, barrier-free
Trail Surface	Gravel
Associated facilities	Interpretive signs, picnic sites & improved picnic shelters

Project Description

The Halibut Point Pedestrian Walkway Project would consist of developing a walkway from the north to the south end of Halibut Point State Recreation Site. The walkway would begin in the 4000 block of Halibut Point Road, follow the coast south to the main and north picnic shelters, cross the existing Granite Creek foot bridge, continue to the south picnic shelter, and follow the shoreline to the south beach parking lot (3600 Halibut Point Road). Approximately one mile of barrier-free gravel walkway would be constructed. Sections of the walkway would include using existing trails in the park.

Public Needs Met

The Sitka area has very few coastal walkways for pedestrians. This project has been identified by the Sitka State Parks Citizen's Advisory Board and listed in their five-year plan. This coastal walkway would provide an alternative location for pedestrians and bikers

in this area. The trail would link existing recreation facilities within Halibut Point State Recreation Site and the highway, including the Magic Island Dive Trail. Pedestrians and bikers would be provided with a safe alternative to walking on the highway and be able to avoid negotiating the dangerous corner in the 4000 block of Halibut Point Road. This project would also provide interpretive signs along the walkway about the coastal environment, construct benches, improve the south and north picnic shelter, and improve some of the walkways and paths within Halibut Point State Recreation Site.

Planning and Design

Preliminary design work is needed to determine exact location and costs.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

Project participants: Sitka State Parks Citizens Advisory Board, Sitka Trail Works, Inc., Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Halibut Point Pedestrian Walkway			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Trail Tread	1 mile		\$700.0
Picnic Shelter Replacements	2	\$50,000/ea	\$100.0
Benches	5	\$1,000/ea	\$5.0
Signage	5	\$5,000/ea	\$25.0
Planning & Design			\$80.0
Total Projected Cost			\$910.0

Halibut Point Pedestrian Walkway



0 500 ft 1000 ft

Map Key

- Proposed Trail
- Existing Trail
- Paved Road
- Gravel Road



Proposed Sitka Cross Trail
Indian River to Starrigavan
Extension

Granite Creek Road

Harbor Mountain Road

Granite Creek

Halibut Point Road

AKDPOR
State Parks
Office

Halibut Point
Recreation Area

Shelter

Magic Island

Magic Island
Dive Trail

Shelters

Halibut Point
Pedestrian
Walkway

Halibut Point
Pedestrian
Walkway

Coastal Trails

John Brown's Beach Trail

John Brown's Beach Trail	
Total Length	1,000 ft (one way)
Difficulty Level	Easy, ADA standards planned
Trail Surface	Gravel
Associated facilities	Benches, interpretive signs

Project Description

The John Brown's Beach trail skirts the northwest corner of Japonski Island and ends at a sandy beach that opens onto excellent views of Sitka Sound and surrounding mountain peaks. It begins adjacent to a parking area on the USCG Air Station, passes a memorial to the Bureau of Indian Affairs Sanatorium tuberculosis victims and follows a secluded route along the shore. The trail is used locally as a place for quiet reflection and to access the small but popular sand beach. The grave of an early Sitka resident, John Brown is enclosed with a whitewashed picket fence near the western end of the trail.

The trail is located on USCG Air Station Sitka property and is open to the public subject to the discretion of the base commander. In 2001, Coast Guard personnel improved the trail to the monument to ADA standards. Construction changes are currently underway on the base. In the summer of 2002 the commander plans to put a fence at the trailhead in order to control access.

Current security considerations at the base allow for daylight use of the trail but prohibit trail improvements that would increase visitation levels to the memorial.

Public Needs Met

The trail is especially meaningful to Alaskans, and serves an important function as a memorial to the many years that Alaskans fought an unrecognized tuberculosis epidemic. A granite memorial was placed near the trailhead in 1999, by the USCG, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska and the AKDOTPF, to commemorate tuberculosis victims who left families in villages all over Alaska in order to come to the Bureau of Indian Affairs Sanatorium for treatment. Many of these Alaskans were interred on Japonski Island, never to return to their homes. The trail provides a quiet and private beach for single family picnics and is used by locals practicing Tai Chi. The trail provides an easy level of exercise and is utilized by patients at the SEARHC hospital.

Planning and Design

The trail will be maintained to support the current use. New plans and designs were rejected given concerns that it would be unwise, at this time, to increase visitation to the trail over the current level.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Sitka Tribe of Alaska will be responsible for trail maintenance.

Project participants: USCG Airstation Sitka, Federal Aviation Administration, Sitka Trail Works, Inc.

See Japonski Island Pathway map for John Brown's Beach Trail location, page 40.

Alpine Trails

Alpine and coastal trails were highly favored for future trail development in the Sitka Trail Survey. The Draft Trail Plan presented four trail proposals that offered Alpine hiking opportunities:

- The Lucky Chance Mines Historic Trail (included in the Final Plan as a Cultural Interest Trail)
- The Harbor Mountain Trails (listed as a Near Town Trail in the Draft Trail Plan but re-categorized as Alpine Trails in the Trail Plan)
- Medvejie Trail/Route from Bear Cove to Camp Lake (revised from the Draft Trail Plan proposal)
- The Sisters Alpine Trail, a 21-mile backpacking trail from Verstovia to Starrigavan. (Dropped)

The Sister's Alpine Trail proposal received mixed public comment. A number of residents pointed out that all of the alpine ridges off the Sitka road system (except Bear Mountain) currently had trails and relatively high levels of use. Several warm years have led to an unusually small snow pack on the north slopes of the Sisters. If this trend is reversed, a trail here might be unusable or have a very short season, making a large investment unwise. For this, and other reasons, the Sister's Alpine Trail has been dropped from the Final Plan.

Several comments also expressed concern about the route to Camp Lake. The committee decided to incorporate a revised version of this proposal in the final plan, stressing reconstruction of the existing trail from Bear Cove to Medvejie Lake. Light brushing

and essential tread work will be done on the trail from Medvejie Lake to Camp Lake. Tent pads at Camp Lake will only be constructed if needed to protect the site from erosion.

The Trail Plan Committee discussed the construction of an alpine trail or route cross-Baranof from Camp Lake to Baranof Warm Springs. The route has been used by Sitkans for years to test alpine travel and orienteering skills and is valued because of these challenges. The Trail Plan Committee concluded that constructing this trail would ruin this attraction, and could attract hikers without the skills necessary to safely complete the route. For these reasons, the committee recommended the route be left completely undeveloped. It is possible that an electrical cable will be laid crossing the island along this route. The Trail Plan could be amended to include a developed trail along the inter-tie corridor, should the electrical inter-tie project be approved and funded.

The committee considered several other alpine trails. One was a trail or route from the head of Blue Lake to Glacier Lake. This route would be of historic interest due to the corduroy road and other relics of the gold mining attempt at Glacier Lake. This idea was dismissed due to the difficulty of access and concern about maintaining water quality in Blue Lake. An alpine trail above Green Lake was suggested but access problems, expense, and distance from town made this trail less desirable.

Other hiking routes into the alpine, including various ascents up Bear Mountain, Cross Mountain and Verstovia were considered.

Because the most expensive portion of most alpine trails is the ascent from sea level, the committee agreed it should first expend resources on trails that already exist, such as Harbor Mountain, or can be connected to other trails (for example, a connection of Verstovia trail to the Sisters trail). Also, to maintain a diversity of experiences, the committee felt that some of the more popular bush-whacking routes should stay as they are. Some people prefer to find their own way without a trail.

Committee members discussed whether to publicize bush-whacking routes. It was the committee's consensus that, because even low levels of use can quickly damage the native soils on most routes, sharing these routes should be at the discretion of those who know them.

Alpine Trails

Harbor Mountain Trails ADA Accessible Viewpoint Trail	
Total Length	200 feet
Difficulty Level	Moderate
Trail surface	Gravel

ADA Accessible Viewpoint Trail—A wheelchair accessible viewpoint will be created by improvements to an existing picnic area.

Harbor Mountain Trails Cross Country Ski/Mountain Bike Trail	
Total Length	3 miles
Difficulty Level	Challenging to difficult
Trail Surface	Gravel

Cross Country Ski / Mountain Bike Trail—Trail construction will clear a 10-foot wide path on the benchlands between the 900 and 1300-foot elevation levels on Harbor Mountain. A two-foot wide path will be rocked to allow for summer use by bikers and hikers.

Harbor Mountain Trails Lookout Tower Trail	
Total Length	.5 mile
Difficulty Level	Easy
Trail Surface	Gravel

Lookout Tower Trail—The existing trail to this site is badly eroded. This route will be improved and extended to create a loop trail. Ruins of a World War II Lookout tower offer a panoramic view of Sitka Sound.

Harbor Mountain Trails

Public Needs Met

The Cross Country Ski Trail will help alleviate the conflict between motorized and non-motorized winter activities on Harbor Mountain. Most motorized use is concentrated on the road and this trail will reduce the potential for accidents between skiers and snow machines.

The Lookout Trail and the Accessible Viewpoint Trail will appeal to resident and visitor alike. Harbor Mountain is one of the few areas in southeast Alaska where sub-alpine can be reached by vehicle. A recent slide closed upper portions of Harbor Mt. Road. Repairs to the road will be complete by 2003. These seasonal trails will provide interpretation of local flora as well as WWII history. The ADA Accessible Viewpoint Trail will allow access to people who are not able to hike other trails.

Planning & Design

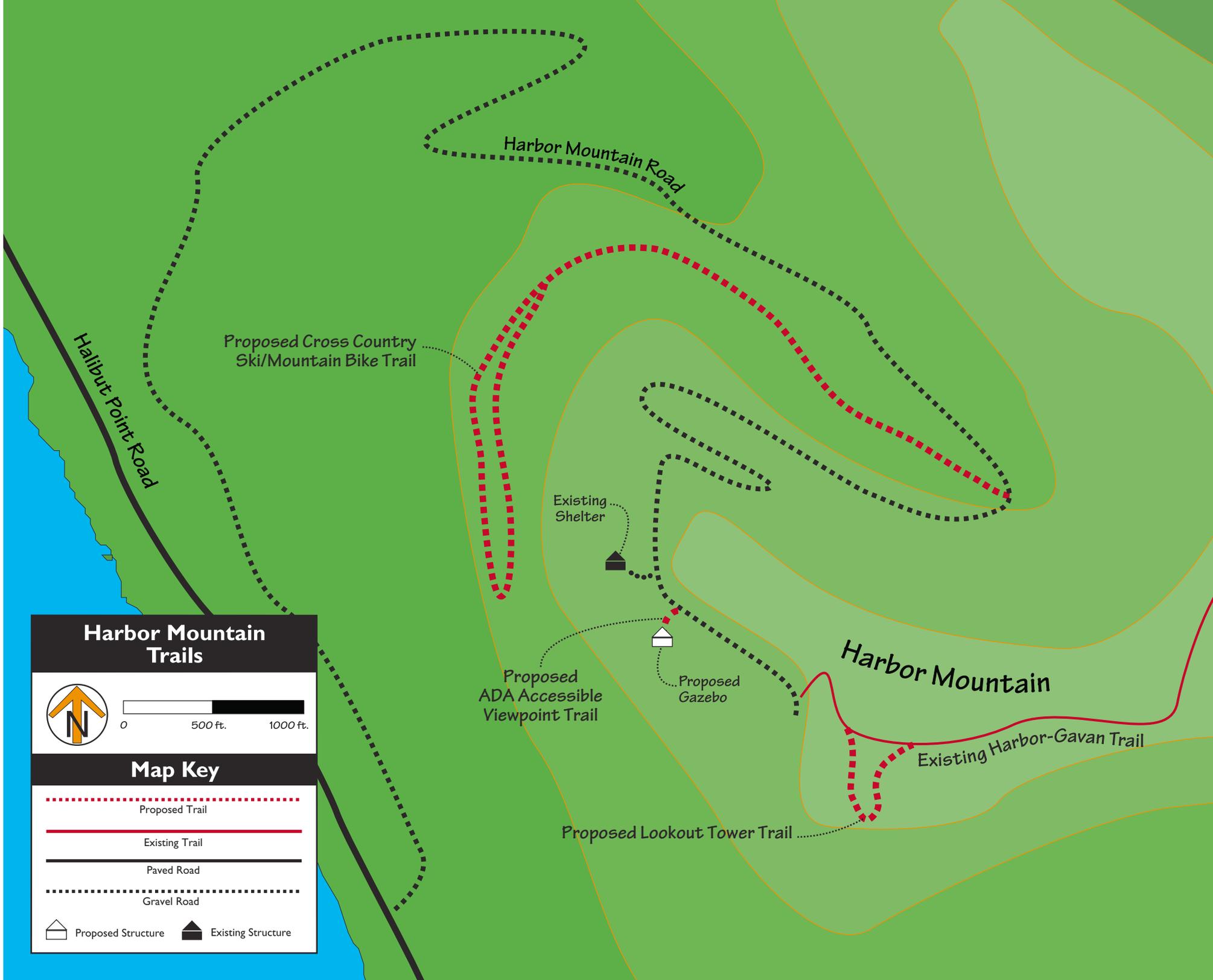
Survey and design is needed to estimate the cost of this project. Following design, funding is needed for construction. The required NEPA planning (for federal lands) could proceed with information already obtained for this proposal. The projects are entirely on National Forest lands and will be developed as funding become available.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: USDA Forest Service.

Project participants: Sitka Tribe of Alaska, USDA Forest Service.

Harbor Mountain Trails	
Items	Total (x 1,000)
ADA Accessible Viewpoint Trail	\$15.6
Cross Country Ski/Mountain Bike Trail	\$310.9
Lookout Tower Trail	\$90.0
Signs & Information	\$14.0
Planning, Design & Administration	\$90.0
Total Projected Cost	\$520.5



Harbor Mountain Trails



Map Key

- Proposed Trail
- Existing Trail
- Paved Road
- Gravel Road
- Proposed Structure
- Existing Structure

Alpine Trails

Bear Cove to Camp Lake Route

Bear Cove to Camp Lake Route	
Total Length	5 miles
Difficulty Level	20% easy, 80% moderate
Trail Surface	None, with need for brushing and minor tread improvements due to good native mineral soils
Associated facilities	Two gravel camp sites in the vicinity of Camp Lake

Project Description

This project would reconstruct the existing trail from Bear Cove to Medvejie Lake, and brush a route on to Camp Lake. This route will lead hikers through the outstanding scenery of the Yosemite-like Medvejie valley. The route would be constructed to a rustic standard in order to maintain the wild character of the area and reduce costs. This would be possible because competent mineral soils in the area make a durable walking surface.

The Bear Cove to Medvejie Lake portion would receive a new bridge and gravel surfacing, similar to the Mosquito Cove Trail. The Medvejie to Camp Lake route would be brushed with trail tread work only where needed for erosion protection or safety. At Camp Lake, camping pads would be installed only if needed to prevent erosion.

Public Needs Met

Because of the spectacular scenic quality of the Medvejie valley, it is expected that this route/trail will be popular with residents and visitors alike. It can be used for a short day hike to view the lake, as an overnight hike to Camp Lake, or as the first leg of the Cross-Baranof Island route to Baranof Warm Springs. It is accessible by walking or biking from Herring Cove along the Green Lake Road or by skiff from Sitka.

Planning and Design

A design narrative report would provide field verified cost estimates and preliminary design. The required NEPA planning (on Federal lands) could proceed from the information in this report and informed decisions could be made about whether and how to proceed. Detailed design and construction would follow this step.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.

Project participants: City & Borough of Sitka, NSRAA, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, USDA Forest Service.

Bear Cove to Camp Lake Route			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Trail Tread	.75 mile	\$25.00/lf	\$100.0
Camping Pads	2	\$1,000/ea	\$2.0
Signs & Information	5	\$5,000/ea	\$25.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$20.0
Total Projected Cost			\$147.0

Water Routes

Magic Island Underwater Trail

Magic Island Underwater Trail	
Total Length	Approximately .25 mile
Difficulty Level	Easy dive on calm days, moderate dive when swell is present
Associated facilities	Interpretive signs and guide line, onshore kiosk

Project Description

The Magic Island Underwater Trail would consist of about 10 interpretive signs placed at depths of up to 45 feet around Magic Island. It would be part of the State of Alaska’s Halibut Point Recreation Area. A line would guide divers from one sign to the next. The signs would describe the wide variety of plant and animal life found along the underwater trail. Local divers would assist in the design and implementation of this project. A map of the site would be available in pamphlet form.

Public Needs Met

Sitka has captured some attention as a surfing destination, but few people know about the excellent diving opportunities in Sitka Sound. Nutrient rich water supports a broad spectrum of marine organisms, fishes, and a variety of colorful kelp, leading many local divers to regard Sitka Sound as one of the best places to dive in the world. The underwater

trail will help educate students and local and visiting divers about the underwater habitat. An established dive trail will contribute to economic diversification of the community by helping local businesses attract additional visitors to Sitka.

Planning and Design

A preliminary investigation indicates that the site is naturally suited to an underwater trail. The design process will include a survey to determine the appropriate locations for interpretive signs, the design of the signs, sign mounts, and the shore side kiosk. It is likely that permits will be needed.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.

Project participants: Sitka Area Divers, Underwater Historic Diving Society, Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources Div. of Parks & Outdoor Recreation, Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Funding Options

Funding may be available from diving organizations such as the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI). Matching grants may also be available from the Recreation Trails Program.

Magic Island Underwater Trail			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Kiosk	1	\$2000/ea.	\$2.0
Brochure & Promotion			\$1.0
Signs & Hardware			\$8.0
Contingency			\$2.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$4.0
Total Projected Cost			\$17.0

Halibut Point State Recreation Site

Existing parking area

Existing trail

Sand spit

Trailhead kiosk

Magic Island

Approximately 10 underwater interpretive stations connected by rope

Harbor Mountain Road

Halibut Point Road

Magic Island Underwater Trail



Map Key

- Proposed Trail (dotted red line)
- Existing Trail (solid red line)
- Paved Road (solid black line)
- Proposed Structure (white house icon)
- Existing Structure (black house icon)
- Installation (white square icon)
- Buildings (black square icon)

Water Routes



The Trail Plan Committee felt that kayak trails had the potential to provide economic and recreational benefits to the community, but publication of kayak trails was not generally supported as part of the Trail Plan due to local safety considerations. Comments expressed concerns that kayak use be dispersed rather than concentrated and that visiting kayakers understand, appreciate, and properly prepare for the outer coastal marine safety issues in the area. Commercial kayak businesses and B&B's may choose to share local knowledge about routes with visiting kayakers.

Kayak Harbor Improvements

The need for better kayak facilities in the City's harbors was highlighted in the Draft Trail Plan comments. The Trail Plan calls for a more user friendly harbor system by developing kayak storage and launching facilities in proximity to phones, showers and stores. A pamphlet for visiting kayakers was also suggested in order to convey information about safe and unsafe routes through the harbors, launching areas and services. Local kayak users and commercial outfitters intend to work with the Port and Harbors Commission and the Parks and Recreation Committee in order to achieve these goals.

Sitka Harbors Kayak Improvements			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Sitka Kayak Harbor	1		\$400.0
Campsite	1		\$1.0
Signs & Information			\$10.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$65.0
Total Projected Cost			\$476.0

Bicycles are used for transportation and recreation and a variety of trail type opportunities are needed in the community. This plan recommends that the Cross Trail extensions, the Indian River Trail connection, the Japonski Island Loop and the Sawmill Cove loop all be constructed for the needs of those who use bicycles for transportation. The current prohibition on bicycle use on the portion of the Cross Trail on Sheldon Jackson College property, and along the water flume, will need to be resolved in order to fulfill the transportation capabilities of these routes. All of these routes will be used by bicyclists in a recreational sense as well. Distance cyclists will be able to train safely over the entire bicycle transportation route.



Bicycle Trails

Single Track Mountain Bike Trails

The Trail Plan Committee considered mountain bike use of existing hiking trails and looked for opportunities for new mountain bike trails.

Design Challenges

In southeast Alaska, where the organic soils are highly erosive, mountain bikes require different trail construction standards than do hiking trails. Mountain bike tires exert substantial force on the ground in some situations, so gravel surfacing must be more substantial. Stairs can be difficult for bikes to use, or designed to be part of the challenge of a particular trail. Sight distances must be longer on trails used by bikes to avoid collisions on blind curves.

User Group Needs and Compatibility

Mountain bikers desire the same trail qualities as hikers—solitude, variety and scenic views. They want trails that offer challenge and are not too wide—know as “single track” trails. They believe that bikes can coexist with hikers on local trails, but some mountain bikers believe that hikers simply don’t wish to share “their” trails with other user groups. Hikers and bikers can co exist on trails that are safely designed and designated for multi-use.

Present Opportunities

There are few opportunities for single-track mountain bike riding in Sitka. Some areas that had been used, like Japonski Island, Indian River

Trail and lower Indian River have been developed for other purposes or have prohibited mountain bikes due to erosion concerns.

Trail Plan Recommendations

Given the fact that there are soils present in the Sitka area that could possibly sustain mountain bike use this plan recommends and supports development of a mountain bike trail. This plan identifies this project as a possibility and leaves room for it in the future.

Local mountain bike interests should continue working to identify areas near Sitka with soils suitable for development of a single track mountain bike loop. An organization of mountain bikers or a mountain bike club is badly needed in Sitka, and such a group could turn the desire for a mountain bike trail into reality. Area landowners such as the City & Borough of Sitka and the USDA Forest Service are receptive to development of such a trail, provided that erosion into freshwater systems does not occur, and provided that the trail is constructed in a safe manner. There are also resources like the International Mountain Bike Association that could provide design assistance.

There are two future possibilities for a single track mountain bike trail. As a part of the Indian River Trailhead Relocation Project a conceptual design has been rendered that proposes to locate 3,000 ft. of single track between the parking area at the trailhead and Indian River. (See Indian River Trail Connection, page 38.) This plan proposes that the Thimbleberry Lake to Heart Lake Trail be

Single Track Mountain Bike Trails

constructed as a mountain bike/hiking trail. (see Thimbleberry to Heart Lake Trail, page 42.) The ground along this trail is often rocky and would be well-suited to bike use. Trail alignment could be designed with help from mountain bikers to provide adequate sight distance for bikes, hikers, and bears. Bikers could ride to the trail along existing and proposed bike routes. It is also possible that a single-track addition to the Thimbleberry to Heart Lake Trail could be constructed on the National Forest lands west of the trail.

ATV & Snow Machine Trails

ATV Trails

ATV's ride on the remote logging road systems and on the Multi-use trails in the Starrigavan Valley. The trail plan proposes to extend and upgrade the Starrigavan Valley Multi-use trail system. ATV use is also allowed on portions of Kruzof Island. Currently areas allowing ATV use are very limited. The trail plan can be amended to allow for future projects.

Sitka's outlying area has a complex system of remote logging roads that are used by all-terrain vehicles (ATV's) and mountain bikers. Decisions regarding the use of logging roads will not be addressed in the trail plan. The USDA Forest Service is the agency responsible for the maintenance and status of most logging roads and it has opted to address options for use and maintenance of logging roads through another process.

The snow machine group would like to see improved access to more alpine areas that have reliable snow conditions for their sport. This could relieve crowding at Harbor Mountain and allow more varied riding experiences.

For snowmobilers, trails are primarily access routes to reach alpine bowls and ridges where good snow conditions can be found all winter. A complete snow machine "trail" also needs to include a road to the snowline with parking for trucks with trailers.

Snowmachine Trails

Several different areas were initially suggested for consideration for snowmobile trails. A route was proposed from the third gate on the Harbor Mountain Road that leads to the alpine bowls on the side of Harbor Mountain. After it was determined that these bowls are prone to avalanche, it did not appear prudent to pursue construction. Another location discussed was extension of the road up Cascade Creek, but construction was deemed too difficult in this crowded narrow valley. A third possibility, which is being evaluated on the ground by the snowmobilers, is a route from Starrigavan Valley onto the Cascade Creek basin near the existing alpine hut.

ATV & Snow Machine Trails

Starrigavan Valley Multi-Use Trails

Starrigavan Valley Multi-Use Trails	
Total Length	2.5 miles
Difficulty Level	Easiest to most difficult, according to ATV standards
Trail Surface	Gravel

Project Description

This trail system will combine with the existing road system in Starrigavan Valley to provide loop trails for both motorized and non-motorized use. Some components of the project have already been built including a training area and a .5 mile loop. The proposed 2.5 miles will complete the project. Varying levels of difficulty will be represented by each loop. The trails will provide views of Starrigavan Creek and meander through young forests.

Project update: As the trail plan went to press in the spring of 2003 a \$30,000 Recreational Trails grant to the Sitka Recreational Riders and the USFS had been received. A new 2,700 foot loop will be constructed with this grant and in kind support from the USFS leaving three loops to build in the future.

Public Needs Met

This trail will provide an area for ATV use that is unavailable elsewhere from the Sitka road system. Mountain bikes and hikers also use the area. Community support has been solid in support of this trail system with many volunteer hours already spent to rehabilitate the existing road system. This is the only area available year round to legally ride ATV's that is accessible from the road system. There are over 200 riding enthusiasts in Sitka.

Planning and Design

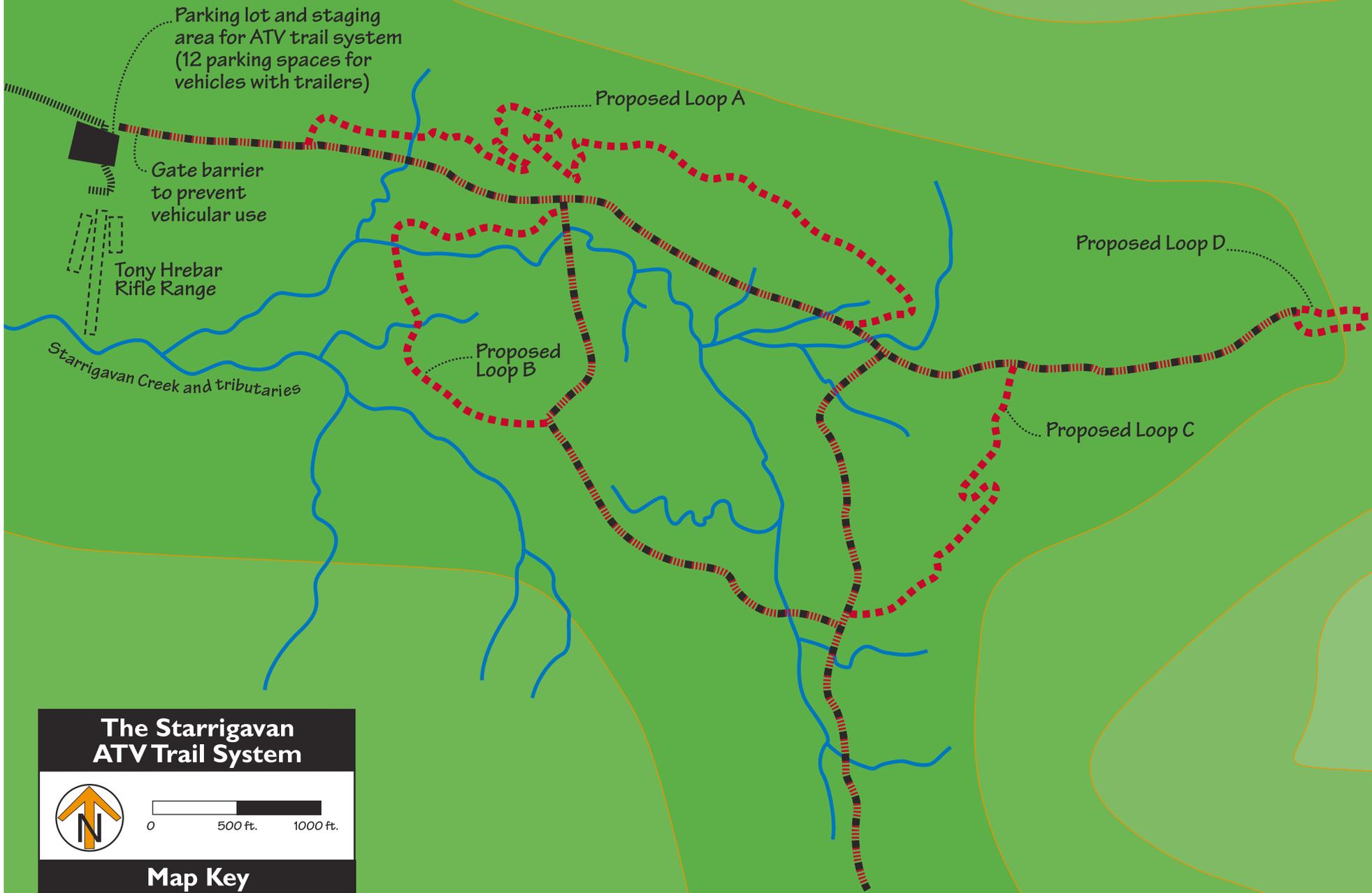
Survey and design is needed to estimate the cost of this project. Following design, funding is needed for construction. Additional planning normally needed for new construction has already been completed. Mountain bikers and skiers are invited to participate on future loop construction. The USDA Forest Service manages the land where this trail system will be located and would coordinate trail planning.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead Agency: USDA Forest Service.

Project Participants: Sitka Recreational Riders ATV Club, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Sitka Trail Works, Inc.

Starrigavan Valley Multi-Use Trails			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Trail surface	2.5 miles	\$20/lf	\$250.0
Signs & Information			\$1.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$24.0
Total Projected Cost			\$275.0



The Starrigavan ATV Trail System




Map Key

- Proposed ATV Trail
- Existing ATV Trail
- Unimproved Road (No RV Access)

Trail Reconstruction



Chapter IV: Taking Care of the Trails We Have

Individuals and agencies that responded to the 1999 Sitka Trail Survey and that commented on the Draft Trail Plan consistently pointed out the need to take better care of the trails already in existence. A number of things have contributed to an accumulation of disrepair of area trails. Trails have become more popular with both residents and an expanding tourism industry. Problems keeping up with that use are emerging. These are: limited agency budgets with little left over for existing trails, lack of planning and funding for future trail maintenance, and changes in land status and ownership. The trans-boundary nature of the trails themselves muddies the responsibility for trail maintenance between and among the landowners.

Sitka Trail Works, as part of its mission as a non-profit organization, has dedicated itself and its resources to assisting in developing and executing a plan of trail maintenance for the area. The MOU between the trail plan partners proposes that the partners to the plan meet regularly to develop a plan of work that defines goals for area trail maintenance each year. The partners will work together to coordinate their resources to produce an efficient system of trail maintenance that avoids duplication of effort. Local programs for youth employment like after-school and on-the-job training programs can combine with volunteer labor for upkeep of area trails.

When appropriate, user fees should be collected by the agencies and governments from commercial operators utilizing the trails and these funds can be directed to trail maintenance. The MOU forum will allow a coordinated approach to setting user fees.

In accordance with USDA Forest Service concerns that existing trails be properly maintained before further expansion of the area trail system take place, trail reconstruction is given a higher priority than new trail construction. Two of the largest new trail construction projects, Lucky Chance Mine (19 miles) and South Sitka Sound (17 miles), cross National Forest lands. The backlog of deferred maintenance projects is a hurdle that must be cleared before these exciting new trail projects can be started.

It makes sense that Sitka Trail Works, Inc., as a citizens advocacy group for trails, educate the public about the need for increased federal funding directed to the Southeast Alaska Region 10 and the Sitka Ranger District. Additional funds would allow for more resources to be dedicated to trail design, permitting, construction, forest account crews, and contract preparation.

**Trail Reconstruction
Projects Vicinity Map**

- Sealion Cove Trail
- Indian River Trail
- Verstovia Trail
- Baranof Lake
- Sadie Lake Trail
- Harbor Mountain – Gavan Hill Trail
- Starrigavan Estuary Trail
- Beaver Lake Loop
- Lake Eva Trail
- Sitkoh Lake Trail
- Sashin Lake Trail
- North Beach Trail
- White Sulphur Hot Springs Trail
- Port Banks Trail



Trail Reconstruction

Sea Lion Cove Trail

Sea Lion Cove Trail Reconstruction	
Total Length	2.5 miles
Difficulty Level	Easy to moderate
Trail Surface	Boardwalk and gravel

Project Description

The popular trail from Kalinin Bay to Sea Lion Cove is in need of extensive maintenance and re-construction. This will require replacing a couple of small stream bridges and replacing stairs, boardwalk and gravel walkways.

The existing trail is dangerous. The stream crossing bridges are slanted and slippery. Hikers have reported slipping and falling on the bridges, and nearly falling off one of the bridges.

Sea Lion Cove Trail is the only trail in Southeast Alaska that leads to the rugged outside Pacific Ocean coast. It is much loved in Sitka and by visitors for its beautiful beach and interesting route. The trail follows a gap between two steep mountain ridges and passes a small lake. Sea Lion Cove Beach is a beautiful, remote, mile long sandy beach, bordered on either side by rocky headlands and rock beaches.

Project update: As the Trail Plan goes to press Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation and Sitka Trail Works, Inc. have accumulated \$155,000 in grants and private donations to be applied to reconstruction of this popular trail. Work will be completed in 2003. A user fee system for commercial operators is recommended as a means for funding future trail improvements.

Planning and Design

Planning and design will be developed by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation and Sitka Trail Works, Inc., with assistance from the USDA Forest Service.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

Project participants: Sitka Trail Works, Inc., City & Borough of Sitka, USDA Forest Service, The Boat Company, private donors.

Sea Lion Cove Trail Reconstruction			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Trail Construction	2.5 miles		\$77.0
Materials			\$50.0
Mobilization			\$60.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$20.0
Crew accommodations			\$15.0
Total Projected Cost			\$220.0

Kruzof Island

Kalinin Bay

Rocky cliffs

Grassy tidal flats

Long sandy beach open to swell from ocean.

Trail follows shoreline of scenic lake

"Landmark Tree Stand" of giant spruce

Pacific Ocean

Sealion Cove

Sealion Cove Trail



Map Key

-  Proposed Hiking Trail
-  Proposed Anchorage
-  Existing Campsite

Trail Reconstruction

Indian River Trail

Indian River Trail	
Total Length	5 miles
Difficulty Level	Easy
Trail Surface	Boardwalk, gravel and mineral soils

Proposal Description

Some of the bridges over Indian River are aging and are in need of replacement. The last mile of the trail is in poor condition, eroded, and more difficult to hike than the first three miles. Sections of the trail are sloughing into the river and require relocation. This work is beyond the scope of routine maintenance.

Public Needs Met

Indian River trail receives heavy use all year and needs to be repaired to prevent damage to the trail. Visitors, guided groups, and local hikers use the trail.

Planning and Design

A thorough evaluation must be completed to determine the exact extent of the work required. Proposals for funding must be completed along with required environmental analysis.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: USDA Forest Service.

Project participants: Sitka Trail Works, Inc., Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities, Baranof Island Housing Authority, CBS, Sheldon Jackson College, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Sitka National Historical Park,

Indian River Trail Reconstruction Preliminary Cost Estimate			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Repair hazardous structures			\$13.0
Repair trail damage			\$12.0
Improve Tread			\$30.0
Mobilization			\$60.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$8.0
Total Projected Cost			\$123.0

Verstovia Trail

Trail Reconstruction

Verstovia Trail	
Total Length	2 miles
Difficulty Level	Difficult
Trail Surface	Log steps, aggregate, native tread

Proposal Description

This trail climbs to the top of Mt. Verstovia. It begins near sea level and passes through a spruce- hemlock forest then climbs steeply to a sub alpine meadow just above the tree line. A route continues along the rocky ridge and to the exposed peak of the mountain. Because of the trails steep grade, water diversion structures are needed along with additional log and stone steps. Several sections of the trail need additional hardening with aggregate. Some sections may need rerouting to reduce the trail grade.

Public Needs Met

This heavily used trail needs extensive work to protect the trail from continued erosion and to provide safer access for both winter and summer use. Heavy winter use of the trail leaves it icy and in places dangerous. Rerouting sections and adding additional drainage structures will reduce the potential for ice to build up on the trail.

Planning and Design

A thorough evaluation must be completed to determine the exact extent of the work required. Proposals for funding must be completed along with required environmental analysis.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.

Project participants: USDA Forest Service, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Trust.

Verstovia Trail Reconstruction Preliminary Cost Estimate			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Improve Tread			\$150.0
Mobilization			\$60.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$20.0
Total Projected Cost			\$230.0

Trail Reconstruction

Baranof Lake Trail

Baranof Lake Trail	
Total Length	800 feet
Difficulty Level	Easy
Trail Surface	Boardwalk

Proposal Description

The Baranof Lake trail, from the public float in Warm Springs Bay to Baranof Lake is showing signs of wear and neglect as years of use by Alaskan residents, visitors and fishermen take their toll. In recent years small tour operators have brought visitors to the trail. Current trail conditions can not sustain present levels of use. Recently, the Baranof Property Owners Association has approached the private tour operators and Sitka Trail Works, in an attempt to coordinate repairs to this trail in 2003.

Public Needs Met

Repair of the trail will address safety, environmental, and liability issues associated with current trail conditions and will allow for access to Baranof Lake by residents, visitors and fishermen.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.

Project participants: Baranof Homeowners Assn., commercial tour operators, volunteers, City & Borough of Sitka, USDA Forest Service, Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Baranof Lake Trail Reconstruction Preliminary Cost Estimate			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Boardwalk materials & labor			\$9.0
Freight			\$3.5
Crew Leader			\$2.5
Total Projected Cost			\$15.0

Sadie Lake Trail

Trail Reconstruction

Sadie Lake Trail	
Total Length	.8 mile
Difficulty Level	Difficult
Trail Surface	Gravel, log stairs & mineral soils

Proposal Description

The Sadie Lake Trail begins near the outflow of Baranof Lake and goes to the southern end of Sadie Lake. The first 100 feet are on City and Borough of Sitka lands and the rest is on National Forest lands. The trail is located in sloping muskeg and is a route with few constructed surfaces. It is extremely muddy, eroded, and slippery. Increased traffic has damaged the natural tread beyond the point of recovery and requires a constructed tread to make it safer for hikers and to reduce erosion. The climb to the lake will require some rerouting and log stairs.

Public Needs Met

This trail provides access to cut throat trout fishing at Sadie Lake and adds to the recreation potential of Warm Springs Bay. It is used commercially by visitors to Baranof Warm Springs, non-commercially by visitors and residents, and by people staying at Baranof

Lake cabin. Sadie Lake Trail is near an alpine route across Baranof Island. It is recommended that a route be marked by rock cairns from the nearest alpine ridge down to the Sadie Lake Trail.

Planning and Design

A thorough evaluation must be completed to determine the exact extent of the work required. A determination of materials available at the site must be done. Proposals for funding must be completed along with required environmental analysis.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.

Project participants: Baranof Homeowners Assn., commercial tour operators, volunteers, City & Borough of Sitka, USDA Forest Service, Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Sadie Lake Trail Reconstruction Preliminary Cost Estimate			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Repair trail damage			\$50.0
Improve Tread			\$150.0
Mobilization			\$70.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$27.0
Total Projected Cost			\$297.0

Trail Reconstruction

Harbor Mountain–Gavan Hill Trail

Harbor Mountain–Gavan Hill Trail	
Total length	6.2 miles
Difficulty level	Moderate
Trail surface	Boardwalk & gravel

Proposal Description

The Harbor Mountain side of this trail is the only trailhead in Southeast Alaska that starts in a sub-alpine area. Access was made possible by construction of Harbor Mountain Road during World War II to support a secret military radar installation. This section of trail offers some of the best views of Sitka Sound and many of the mountains in the area. The Harbor–Gavan trail is one of the most popular trails in Sitka.

Most recently, the heavy snow-loads of the '98 and '99 winters caused some of the boardwalk above tree line to collapse. Much of the Gavan Hill segment of the trail is eroded from where it begins, to where it joins Harbor Mountain in the sub-alpine. Increased use of the trail and failure of some of the erosion structures along the trail are resulting in damage to sensitive sub-alpine areas. Much of the boardwalk above tree line needs to be rebuilt. The sub-alpine needs additional erosion control structures, new steps, and a heavier gravel base on much of the tread.

Public Needs Met

The first .15 mile of Gavan Hill is ADA accessible. This trail begins in downtown Sitka and provides easy access for local hikers and visitors. Hikers can see several distinct southeast environments.

Planning and Design

This is one of Sitka's most popular trails. Sections of it are currently dangerous to hike. The sensitive sub-alpine sections need additional erosion control. A thorough evaluation of the trail must be completed to design structures best suited to withstand snow loads and the amount of foot traffic that the trail receives. Proposals for funding must be completed along with required environmental analysis.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: USDA Forest Service.
Project participant: Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Preliminary Cost Estimate

This cost estimate is based on the existing trail location and could change significantly if the trail is to be relocated.

Harbor Mountain–Gavan Hill Trail Preliminary Cost Estimate			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Repair hazardous structures			\$45.0
Repair trail damage			\$293.0
Mobilization			\$46.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$38.0
Total Projected Cost			\$422.0

Starrigavan Estuary Trail

Trail Reconstruction

Starrigavan Estuary Trail	
Total length	.25 mile
Difficulty level	Easy with grades less than 5% for accessibility to people with disabilities
Trail surface	Boardwalk

Proposal Description

The Estuary Life Trail is part of the Starrigavan Recreation Area. A trailhead sign with self-guided trail brochures is located at the trailhead. The boardwalk begins at an elevation of about 12 feet from the forest floor and remains elevated far above the ground over much of its length. A bird viewing deck and interpretive stations describing the estuary ecosystem are all part of this trail. Materials used to construct the

trail have failed prematurely because of improper chemical treatment. The structural integrity of the trail has been compromised and it must be rebuilt for safety reasons.

Public Needs Met

This trail is to be rebuilt to provide for the safety of people using it. It is a popular trail that receives both recreational and commercial use.

Planning and Design

Design has been completed for this project. The contract has been awarded and work is scheduled to begin in 2003.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: USDA Forest Service.

Starrigavan Estuary Trail Preliminary Cost Estimate			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Repair hazardous structures			\$300.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$40.0
Total Projected Cost			\$340.0

Trail Reconstruction

Beaver Lake Loop Trail

Beaver Lake Loop Trail	
Total length	2 miles
Difficulty level	Moderate
Trail surface	Gravel, boardwalk & log steps

Proposal Description

This new trail will extend the existing Beaver Lake Trail around Beaver Lake to connect back into the existing trail. The route passes through a stand of huge Sitka spruce, over the remnants of an old beaver dam, and then continues on through muskegs providing a panoramic view of the surrounding mountains.

Public Needs Met

The Beaver Lake Loop Trail is part of the proposed Beaver Lake to Herring Cove Trail. This loop will provide additional length to the existing trail and improve access to Bear Mountain for hunters and back country hikers.

Planning and Design

Design has been completed for this project. The contract has been awarded and work is scheduled to begin in 2003.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: USDA Forest Service.

Beaver Lake Loop Trail Preliminary Cost Estimate			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Trail tread	1.95 miles	\$51/lf	\$525.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$20.0
Total Projected Cost			\$525.0

Lake Eva Trail

Trail Reconstruction

Lake Eva Trail	
Total length	2.9 miles
Difficulty level	Moderate
Trail surface	Boardwalk & native tread

Proposal Description

The Lake Eva trail has a long history of use. Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1924, for use by the Bureau of the Fisheries, it runs from Hanus Bay to the southwest corner of Lake Eva, where a dilapidated CCC shelter still remains. Conflicting public uses and poor trail condition requires that the trail location and uses be reevaluated. The current level of use is damaging the trail. Structures are failing and are creating mud holes and tripping hazards. The last 1.5 miles of the trail have received no maintenance in years and it is difficult to follow in some areas due to windfall and landslides.

Public Needs Met

Lake Eva is a popular, year-round, fishing destination. It supports runs of steelhead, sockeye salmon, silver salmon, dolly varden and cutthroat trout. Small cruise ships for wildlife viewing and forest ecology tours use this trail commercially. The trail is also used by fishing guides and their clients, brown bear outfitters and subsistence fishermen.

Planning and Design

A thorough evaluation must be completed to determine the exact extent of the work required and how the area should be managed. Proposals for funding must be completed along with required environmental analysis.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: USDA Forest Service.

Project participants: Private foundations, commercial Interests, Sitka Trail Works, Inc., Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Trail Reconstruction

Sitkoh Lake Trail

Sitkoh Lake Trail Reconstruction	
Total Length	4.3 miles
Difficulty Level	Moderate
Trail Surface	Boardwalk & native tread

Proposal Description

Sitkoh Lake is on the Southeast side of Chichagof Island, about 35 miles northeast of Sitka. The trail extends from Sitkoh Bay to the Forest Service cabin at Sitkoh Lake and follows Sitkoh Creek along much of its length. The trail is muddy with standing water in places. During high flows Sitkoh Creek has washed out sections of the trail and relocation of these sections is needed. Old structures along the trail are failing and in some cases dangerous.

Public Needs Met

This is a heavily used trail leading to a Forest Service cabin. It needs to be rebuilt to protect the trail from erosion and to provide safe access to the cabin. The cabin is popular for

fishing and deer hunting. Sitkoh Creek supports three runs of salmon throughout the summer and one of the best spring steelhead runs in the area.

Planning and Design

A thorough evaluation must be completed to determine the exact extent of the work required. A determination of materials available at the site must be done. Proposals for funding must be completed along with required environmental analysis.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: USDA Forest Service.

Project participants: Private foundations, commercial interests, Sitka Trail Works, Inc., Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game

Sitkoh Lake Trail Preliminary Cost Estimate			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Repair hazardous structures			\$25.0
Repair trail damage			\$80.0
Improve tread			\$230.0
Mobilization			\$70.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$40.0
Total Projected Cost			\$445.0

Sashin Lake Trail

Trail Reconstruction

Sashin Lake Trail Reconstruction	
Total Length	1.7 miles
Difficulty Level	Moderate
Trail Surface	Native wood structures

Proposal Description

Little Port Walter is about 55 miles southeast of Sitka on the east side of Baranof Island. This is a historic trail built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the late 1930's. The old CCC shelter is at the end of the trail on Sashin Lake. National Marine Fisheries Service has a research station at Little Port Walter today. There is good trout fishing in Sashin Lake and nearby Round Lake. The trail is in poor condition, wet and muddy. Currently the trail is closed because elevated structures and bridges are falling apart and are dangerous. This proposal is to rebuild the trail to match its historic design.

Public Needs Met

Residents of Port Alexander and other small enclaves within the vicinity use this trail. Guides use the area for fishing and small cruise ships have expressed interest in using the trail.

Employees of National Marine Fisheries use the trail for recreation and to maintain a waterline that supplies the hatchery with fresh water.

Planning and Design

A thorough evaluation must be completed to determine the exact extent of the work required. A determination of materials available at the site must be done. Proposals for funding must be completed along with required environmental analysis.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: Sitka Trail Works, Inc.

Project participants: Commercial tour interests, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, USDA Forest Service.

Sashin Lake Trail Reconstruction Preliminary Cost Estimate			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Repair hazardous structures			\$215.0
Repair trail damage			\$70.0
Improve tread			\$25.0
Mobilization			\$43.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$35.0
Total Projected Cost			\$388.0

Trail Reconstruction

North Beach Trail

North Beach Trail Reconstruction	
Total Length	.25 miles
Difficulty Level	Easy
Trail Surface	Gravel

Proposal Description

North Beach Trail is located on the west shore of Kruzof Island. It can be accessed from Kruzof Island Road about 6.25 miles from Mud Bay. The trail winds through old beach fringe forest to the North Beach Cabin and beach. The trail is rutted and eroded due to deterioration of the original granite surfacing.

Public Needs Met

This trail was specifically built to provide motorized access to the North Beach Cabin and beach. These facilities were designed to separate motorized and non-motorized use in Shelikof Bay and reduce conflicting use of the Shelikof Cabin and beach

Planning and Design

A complete evaluation of the site must be completed along with a determination of suitable materials available on location. Proposals for funding must be completed along with required environmental analysis.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: USDA Forest Service.

Project participants: Sitka Recreational Riders ATV club, Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

North Beach Trail Reconstruction Preliminary Cost Estimate			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Repair trail damage & improve tread			\$43.0
Mobilization			\$7.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$6.0
Total Projected Cost			\$56.0

White Sulphur Trail

Trail Reconstruction

White Sulphur Trail Reconstruction	
Total Length	.9 mile
Difficulty Level	Easy
Trail Surface	Boardwalk

Proposal Description

White Sulphur Hot Springs Trail is 65 miles northwest of Sitka on northwestern Chichagof Island within the West Chichagof/Yakobi Wilderness. Some of the structures on the trail are failing and need replacement including some bridges. Other sections are eroded and muddy.

Public Needs Met

People visiting the cabin and/or bathhouse at the warm springs frequently use this trail. The trail leads from Mirror Harbor to the

cabin and hot springs. White Sulphur Springs Cabin is one of the most popular on Sitka Ranger District. People from Pelican and fishermen often use the bathhouse and anchor at Mirror Harbor during rough weather, hiking the trail to get there. Commercial use occurs at the hot springs and it is a popular spot for people visiting the Wilderness. Often people return to their boats at night, hiking the trail in the dark. Rebuilding sections of this trail will make it safer for hikers and reduce the level of erosion.

Planning and Design

A thorough evaluation must be completed to determine the exact extent of the work required. A determination of materials available at the site must be done. Proposals for funding must be completed along with required environmental analysis.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: USDA Forest Service.

Project participants: City of Pelican, Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Trail Reconstruction

Port Banks Trail

Port Banks Trail Reconstruction	
Total Length	5 miles
Difficulty Level	Moderate
Trail Surface	Native soil & native wood structures

Proposal Description

The Port Banks trail is located on southwest Baranof Island in the South Baranof Wilderness. The trail begins at Port Banks, passes by Plotnikof Lake and ends at Khvostof Lake. This trail is difficult to find but is a historical trail built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s. This proposal includes brushing the trail, replacing old bridges, and native wood tread where needed.

Public Needs Met

South Baranof Wilderness has few hiking trails. This trail provides foot access to fishing in Plotnikof and Khvostof Lakes that otherwise must be accessed by plane. It provides hiking

opportunity for clients of area fishing guides or people staying at Plotnikof Lake Cabin.

Planning and Design

A thorough evaluation must be completed to determine the exact extent of the work required. A determination of materials available at the site must be done. Proposals for funding must be completed along with required environmental analysis.

Lead Agency and Project Participants

Lead agency: USDA Forest Service.

Project participants: Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Port Banks Trail Reconstruction Preliminary Cost Estimate			
Items	Quantity	Cost/Unit	Total (x 1,000)
Repair hazardous structures			\$140.0
Repair trail damage			\$100.0
Improve tread			\$25.0
Mobilization			\$70.0
Planning, Design & Administration			\$25.0
Total Projected Cost			\$360.0

One way that communities can support their citizens in living actively is by providing safe, accessible and attractive trails for walking, hiking and biking. According to the "Take Heart Alaska" fact sheet on physical activity, regular activity can, among other things, help Alaskans feel better, have more energy, reduce stress and live longer. Active living can also reduce the risk of developing high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis, colon cancer, depression and anxiety. One way that communities can support their citizens in living actively is by providing safe, accessible and attractive trails for walking, hiking, and biking. Sitka Trail Works has made great progress in that direction.

**Lisa Sadleir-Hart,
Director of Health Promotion
SEARHC Community Health
Services**

Appendix

Table of Public Comments

Project Title	Comment Synopsis	Rating	Result
Sawmill Creek Road Improvements	Given first priority because of the existing hazardous conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians.	100%	IN PLAN
Sitka Multiple Use Trail Study	Completion of the Cross Trail for use by bicyclists, runners and walkers was the most widely supported project.	92.5%	IN PLAN
Cross Trail to Thimbleberry Lake			
Cross Trail to Starrigavan			
Thimbleberry Lake to Heart Lake	A very popular project. A multiple use trail will connect Thimbleberry Lake to Blue Lake Road via Heart Lake.	62.5%	IN PLAN
Sea Lion Cove Trail Reconstruction	Comments from the Sitka Citizens State Parks Advisory Board and others, gave reconstruction of this trail high priority.	62.5%	IN PLAN
Sisters Alpine Trail System	Written public comments presented a number of compelling reasons why this trail is not be a good idea at this time. ¹	62.5%	DROPPED
Indian River Trail Connection	Respondents supported connecting the trail with Totem Park. On the existing trail, maintenance was emphasized. Use of mountain bikes on the Indian River trail will be reviewed through the USDA FS NEPA process and may or may not be approved.	62.5%	IN PLAN
Lucky Chance Historic Trail	This project is now divided into two projects. The outfall crossing must be designed and funded before the Lucky Chance Mine Historical Trail.	52.5%	IN PLAN
Sitka Causeway WWII Historic Site	Solid support for this project, zero negative comments	50%	IN PLAN

¹ **Short-use season with uncertain snow conditions:** The route around the Sisters Mountains may be snow-free only two or three months a year. Some years portions may never melt out completely: a large investment for such a short use season. **Safety Considerations:** The Sitka Search and Rescue has expressed concern that the trail would attract hikers who may not be prepared for the rigorous conditions. **Existing bushwhacking opportunities:** Alpine ridges with trails accessible from the Sitka road system include Mt. Verstovia, Harbor Mountain, and Gavan Hill. People value Starrigavan Ridge for its solitude and lack of trails. **Alpine deer hunting:** Hunters who prefer to hunt without trails and who may not have a boat would be displaced by the trail network. **Sensitive environments:** Wet, boggy areas around the alpine ridge lakes are extremely sensitive. Damage from off-trail hikers and dogs will inevitably occur. The community may wish to reconsider the Starrigavan Ridge portion of this trail in the future, because it offers exceptional winter recreation opportunities.

Project Title	Comment Synopsis	Rating	Result
Baranof Island Coastal Trail	Support for near town overnight hiking opportunities.	45%	IN PLAN
Harbor Mountain Trails	General support for more work on Harbor Mountain trails. USDA Forest Serviced will reconstruct and has a timeline for other improvements.	40%	IN PLAN
Herring Cove to Beaver Lake Trail	Upgrade this trail after higher priority trails are addressed.	35%	IN PLAN
Medvejie to Camp Lake Route	Comments did not support an upgrade of the trail from Medvejie to Camp Lake. Trail tread improvements will be made only below Medvejie Lake. Light brushing only adjacent the lake.	35%	REVISED
Starrigavan ATV Trails	Supported as an appropriate area near town for ATV's.	30%	IN PLAN
Sitka to Angoon Kayak Trail	There was some interest in this project but no clear concept of a centralized location or network of connected launch points for kayaks. Could be included as an amendment with more work.	30%	DROPPED
Multiple Use of Logging Roads	No specific areas are named but the concept was supported by ATV users and received zero negative comments.	22.5%	IN PLAN
Sitka Kayak Trails	Support for making the harbors more kayak friendly but not for publishing area kayak routes. ²	20%	REVISED
Kruzof Island Coastal Trail	A number of reasons to drop this trail were received. ³	18%	DROPPED
Magic Island Underwater trail	Supported by area divers and the Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources Div. of Parks & Outdoor Recreation. Concept was not well understood by commentors.	17.5%	IN PLAN

² Although the Trail Plan Committee believes that kayak trails have the potential to provide economic benefit to the community, publication of kayak trails is not generally supported as part of the Trail Plan. Comments illustrated concern that kayak use should be dispersed rather than concentrated and that visiting kayakers understand, appreciate and properly prepare independently for the outer coast marine safety issues in the area. Commercial kayak businesses and B&B's may choose to share local knowledge about routes with visiting kayakers. The need for better kayak facilities in the city harbors was highlighted in the Draft Trail Plan comments. The Trail Plan calls for a more user friendly harbor system by developing kayak storage and launching facilities in proximity to phones, showers, and businesses.

³ This trail received mixed response from the public. As many people opposed the project as supported it. Most pointed out that the route was already accessible from the beach and the game trails and that a developed trail would ruin a good bushwhack route. The Trail Plan Committee agreed and determined that it would be better to invest in the South Sitka Sound Trail which offers more diversity along a route that is difficult to walk without a developed trail.

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